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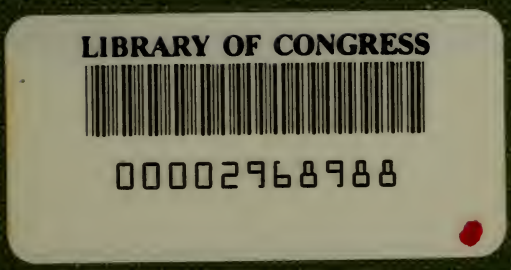

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Joy, and Other Poems

BY

DANSKE DANDRIDGE

SECOND, ENLARGED EDITION

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK AND LONDON
The Knickerbocker Press
1900

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The Knickerbocker Press, New York

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TO THAT PEARL AMONG WOMEN

LILIAN WHITING

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

Invocation

I

Play on my soul, thou Spirit from the skies,
And with me rise
    Far o'er the tops of upward-gazing trees,
That I, before so mute,
Transformed, become thy lute,
    May learn the secret of all harmonies.
Be seated in a warm love-light;
Play tenderly, and from some tranquil height
Drop down clear notes of peace to men below:
Possess me, fly with me—I care not where we go.

II

Ah! do not sing of pain!
    But from the chords entice
At eve a moving strain;
    And, by some rare device,
Turn all my tears to music-pearls, and set

About the borders of thy living lute,
To make, when thou dost sing,
Continuous murmuring,
Faint as the echo of a Naiad's flute,
But flowing with a cool, refreshing sound,
Like hidden waters springing from the ground.

III

Sometimes, I pray thee, Spirit, linger long
Over a drowsy song
Such as new-mated thrushes lisp in sleep;
Make it so soothing and so low
That they who lie awake and know
How tardily the moments come and go,—
All they that lie awake to weep,—
May feel it like a touch of tenderness,
And only they may hear, and only they may bless.

IV

Into thy music put the budding Spring,
With all her birds and every pleasant thing:
With words like flowers thy singing pastures set,
To teach me to forget
The flexed chords that the world had keyed too low;
The strident wail; the shrilling discontent;
And all the dissonance that marred me so
Before I had become thy instrument.

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Poems of the Imagination

Silence

COME down from thine aërial height,
Spirit of the summer night !
Come softly stepping from the slender Moon,
Where thou dost lie upon her gentle breast,
And bring a boon
Of silence and of solace for our rest.

Or lift us, lift our souls to that bright place
Where she doth hide her face ;
Lap us in light and cooling fleece, and steep
Our hearts in stillness ; drench in drowsy dreams ;
Grant us the pleasant languor that beseems,
And rock our sleep.

Quell thy barbed lightning in the sombre west ;
Quiet thy thunder-dogs that bay the Moon ;
Soothe the day's fretting, like a tender nurse ;
Breathe on our spirits till they be in tune :
Were it not best
To hush all noises in the universe,
And bless with solemn quietude, that thus
The still, small voice of God might speak to us ?

Dreams

RUN with me, elves, and lay me on that bed
Bud-strewn beneath my cirque of sister trees,
Wherethrough the young Moon hath embroiderèd
Faint soothing-spell in silver traceries :
Run with me, for I feel the need of dreams ;
Earth palls, and naught is fair but that which seems.

Fashion thin horns of blossom-tubes and blow ;
Tinkle the lucent pebbles of the rill ;
Fetch me a mating bird to twitter low ;
Spin sounds of night, fine-drawn, remote, and shrill ;
And let that elfin whom I hold most dear
Whisper a certain name within mine ear.

Then, as I sleep, the very tender Moon
Ne'er dreamed such sport with her Endymion ;
Nor any love-rapt mortal, late or soon,
Such snatch of rapture from the Immortals won
As I, that, waking, have become so dull,
But, in my dreams, so glad and beautiful.

Joy

I

AH ! did I dream ?
Methought I wandered by a pleasant stream
Whose shaded course through mint and mosses
wound,
Where little talking springlets did abound ;
Bright, many-jewelled singers flashed above,
And sang wise hymns in praise of Joy and Love.

As thus I moved, my heart grew feather-light :
Care shrunk away as shrinks the huddling Night
That sees the rosy finger of the Dawn
Lifted in laughing menace, and is gone.
Grief rustled by me like the frightened snake
Stirring the dry leaves of the under-brake ;
And had I companied with pinched Despair
Her lines had dimpled into laughter there.

II

Ah ! did I dream ?
I found a little glade
For meditation and retirement made ;
Strange tropic trees and shrubs were there for shade,
With ancient oaks that dream of days of yore,
And many a lithe and white-armed sycamore.

All these were 'broidered o'er with rich device
Of patterned tints set as with fingers nice,
Draped with great vines and bloom of myriad hue,
Bright gold, vermilion, silver, rose, and blue ;
Through which, as through a chapel's stainèd glass,
The sunbeams thronged to pass,
Grew faint, and swooned, and fell upon the grass.

Here glanced the waters of a little lake,
Where lay a radiant spirit, half awake,
Upon a lily-leaf, her rocking couch ;
While orchids wafted from each jewelled pouch
Rich odors downward, and a roseate flower
Of the Victoria opened every hour.

III

Ah ! did I dream ?
The vision roused and gayly poising o'er
Each floating leaf, came lightly to the shore,
And greeted me with smiling lips apart,
And, as she smiled, her beauty filled my heart ;
And swiftly, swiftly as a homing dove,
From her sweet eyes to mine her spirit came.
She did not need to breathe her happy name,
I felt that she was Joy, whose mate is Love,
And mother Peace. She shook her loosened hair,
That made a shining circle round her head.
But I—" Dear Joy ! " I cried, " what do you here,
While weary men and women curse and moan,
And pine away, and sin, and hate, and jeer ;
What do you, idling, with closed wings, alone?"

Ah me ! she spoke, and sighed, if Joy can sigh :
" Scant welcome in the homes of men have I.
It is a time of doubting and unrest,
And Greed doth drive me forth from many a breast.
Alas ! I have an ancient enemy,
Whose robes are tinsel, and her face a lie ;
Men call her Pleasure, but I know her twin
Is Pain, their age, Remorse, their shadow, Sin."

She ceased, then smiled, and whispered: "Oft I
come
To this entrancing spot, my blithest home;
Hither I bring young children, fast asleep,
And dreamy youths, and pretty maids who keep
Their early innocence; and I have elves,
Who in these pleasaunces disport themselves,
Speeding in dance the merry moonlit hours,
And deftly training all my vines and flowers."

Again she ceased, and shook her golden crown,
And beckoned to a little roving breeze,
And I, become as light as milkweed down,
Up-blown, was wafted o'er the distant trees,
I know not how.

IV

Ah, did I dream?
I never saw them more,
That glade, that lakelet, and its blooming shore.
Now is late August, and the Virgin stands
And drops her gleanings from warm, languid
hands:
From thistle-heads the loving goldfinch sings,

Young birds, that late were nestlings, try their
wings :
And sometimes, when I watch the moon arise,
I seem to see those glad and childlike eyes.
Tending my borders in the fading light,
I heard light-hearted laughter yesternight ;
And e'en to-day I caught the transient gleam
Of iridescent pinions :—did I dream ?

Hope

AH me ! what battles I have fought !
I would I knew the rune that lays
The swarming shades of weary days
That take the lonely House of Thought !
A restless rabble, unsubdued ;
A wild, and haggard multitude ;
Distorted shapes that spring from tears,
And torments born of wedded fears.

Sometimes, amid the changing rout,
A rainbowed figure glides about,
And from her brightness, like the day,
The whimpling shadows slink away.
I know that lyre of seven strings,
The seven colors of her wings,
The seven blossoms of her crown :
There pansies twine for amethyst ;
Small lilies white as silkweed down;
There myrtle sprays her locks have kissed

And larkspurs that are beryl-blue ;
And varied roses, rich of hue;
With iridescent, loving eyes
Of buds that bloom in Paradise.

Come often, thou ethereal child !
  New-string thy lyre and sing to me.
Thy voice, ecstatic, fresh, and wild,
  Enthralls each dark-browed phantasy.

Beyond the walls she bids me peer
To see a Future, dim and dear,
Sweet faces shining through the mist,
Like children waiting to be kissed ;
A lovely land that knows not pain ;
Atlantis land beyond life's main,
Where we who love may love again :
Ah me ! is this beyond the plan
Of God's beneficence to man ?

On the "Endymion" of Keats

WHERE art thou now, Endymion, where art thou?
The lovely vagrant Moon doth search for thee,
Wand'ring the wide sky over, night by night,
As lorn and pallid as a fading girl.
In vain her Yuccas turn to bloomy pearl
Holding white goblets full of lustrous light
Caught from that argent wealth of radiancy:
Cloistered in cool Magnolia shades, apart,
In vain her mocking-bird doth break his heart
With stress of passion, 'plaining, full of fire,
Wild music born of strenuous desire.
Ay me! Diana! naught can please her now
As in that dim and tender time o'erpast,
When bright Endymion pressed her goddess brow,
And tremulous with overstrain of bliss
Hasted to kiss,
For fear each thrill supreme should be the last.

Would I had met, upon a night serene,
Endymion, that youthful huntress Queen,
Bathed in her loveliness, and wandering,
Searching the glades for thee, thou shepherd king:
  Or pacing slow to muse of love, alone,
Tasting the poignant sweet of memory,
When, moving lightly through the silent sky,
  Upon her Latmos vales she softly shone:
Softly she shone in those entrancing hours,
Her radiance tinged with rose, like laurel flowers,
Not chastely cold as now, translucent, wan,
But flushed with love of thee, Endymion.

Ah! for lost joy, and scent of fading rose,
And tender memories at a sad life's close;
And pain of lonely hearts, forlorn, bereft,
When one is taken and the other left:
No more—there is a silence in the years,
And the old Moon recalls her youth with tears.

The Wood Demon

PART FIRST

SPELLBOUND

I

WITHIN this wood there is a sprite :
He blows his horn both noon and night,
He blows his horn both night and day—
But once he blew my soul away.
He has a lyre, he has a lute,
He has a viol and a flute.

There are strange blossoms in the wood :
Their hue is as the hue of blood :
And in what nook those blossoms grow
There is no wight but him doth know.
He finds and plucks them stem by stem,
And wreathes his cap and horn with them ;
Then sits and pipes beneath his tree,
Airily, O, airily !

II

Of all the women of my race
There is no fairer form or face ;
None wedded to a braver man
Of all the women of my clan ;
Of all the birds that sing and fly
None bore so light a heart as I.
One day I loitered in the glen,
Apart from sight and sound of men :
Afar I heard an elfin horn—
Alas that ever I was born !
I saw, as softly I drew nigh,
What ne'er was seen by mortal eye :
I heard, and still, at times, I hear,
What ne'er was heard by mortal ear :
But when I saw that blood-red flower
I felt the demon's eerie power,
And when I heard that luring strain
I knew I ne'er might rest again.

III

Sometimes, when dews of evening fall,
The message of the fairy horn
Upon the singing breeze is borne :

I leave my goodman in the hall,
I leave my home, my children, all,
To follow where it summons me,
Airily, O, airily.

IV

When from the forest I return
My pulses throb, my temples burn.
" O mother dear, your eyes are wild !
You tremble ! " cries my fairest child.
" Your face is drawn and pinched and old :
Your head is hot : your hands are cold.
O father, father, much I fear
It is not well with mother dear."

My goodman groans ; he does not speak ;
The piteous tears run down his cheek.
The children cluster round my knee
To hear a slumber song from me.
I rock the youngest on my breast,
And put an arm about the rest :
My fairest daughter stands aloof,
And reads me with her eyes of ruth.

I bring them blossoms from the wood ;
But not the flower whose hue is blood.
I sing them songs of every bird ;
But not a song of all I heard
That mocking pixie pipe to me,
Airily, O, airily.

V

When all the place is still in sleep,
By turns I laugh, by turns I weep ;
By turns I sing, by turns I pray—
So wears the restless night away.

My step is slow ; my cheek is pale ;
I feel my vital forces fail.
Ere long I know that I shall lie
A captive 'neath a gleaming eye :
And as my heartbeats die away
His wildest weird that sprite will play :
And as I draw my feeblest breath
His sweetest strain will mock at death :
And when, at last, my spirit flies
He will not pause to close mine eyes,
But he will sing my threnody,
Airily, O, airily.

PART SECOND

THE FAIREST CHILD

I

Upon the eve of Holy-day
All weary on my bed I lay
(Sure never yet, in woman's breast,
Beat such a heart of wild unrest) ;
When, as I wept to give me ease,
A summons floated down the breeze :
It was the demon calling me,
Airily, O, airily.

II

My goodman was away from home.
I said, " Alas ! mine hour is come."
I rose ; I heaved a piteous sigh ;
I said, " Mine hour is come to die !"
I kissed my children, one by one :
I gazed their sleeping forms upon :
But when I kissed my fairest child
Her cheeks were wet, her eyes were wild—
My little maid who might not sleep
Because she heard her mother weep.

III

I threw the casement open wide,
Nor knew that she was by my side ;
The moon was very near the full,
The scudding clouds were white as mull.

With softest tread of naked feet,
And little heart that beat and beat,
Through the dark forest, timorously,
My fairest daughter followed me.
I did not pause to glance behind,
For still I heard, upon the wind,
That distant piping summon me,
Airily, O, airily.

IV

At length I reached the charmèd ring
Wherein that demon sat to sing ;
His lark-like strain was sweet to hear,
And slowly, slowly, I drew near.
It was a hollow, dank and dern,
With tumbled grass and tangled fern.
Again I smelled the blood-red flower :
Ah me ! it was a fearful hour !

He smiled ; he beckoned with his hand :
I had no power to sit or stand.
He held me with his gleaming eye :
I had no power to speak or cry.
I sank upon the matted grass,
And waited for my soul to pass :
The while he sang my threnody,
Airily, O, airily.

V

I looked my last on east and west :
My spirit struggling in my breast.
I looked my last on south and north :
My spirit striving to be forth.
But, as I closed my glazing eye,
I heard my fairest daughter cry,
" O mother, mother, do not die ! "
I heard my fairest daughter say,
" O mother, mother, rise and pray ! "

Without the ring of charmèd trees,
My child, she fell upon her knees.
Her face was white ; her feet were bare ;
Her hands were clasped in fervent prayer ;
Her locks were loose upon the breeze.

She prayed, her voice was weak with fear,
" O Jesus, save my mother dear ! "
The setting moon was very bright—
Good sooth, it was a holy sight.

VI

Just as the precious name she said,
The demon paused, and reared his head :
A discord marred his dreamy strain ;
He writhed as one in mortal pain ;
He threw his lyre upon the path,
And fled as one who flees from wrath.
He left his horn ; he left his lute ;
He left his viol and his flute.

The blossoms drooped as in a swound,
They turned to blood-drops on the ground :
And where I lay, beneath his tree,
The dripping blood-drops clung to me.

VII

My daughter sobbed ; her voice was low ;
" O dearest mother, let us go ! "
She stooped ; she raised me by the hand :
Her presence gave me strength to stand.

The moon had set : the way was drear :
We shook with cold : we sobbed with fear :
But softly, softly, all the way,
The maiden did not cease to pray :
And when the dreary night was past
We knelt together, safe at last.

VIII

And now what more remains to tell?
My fairest daughter prayeth well :
She prayed my spirit free from spell.
But I was weaker than a child ;
My looks were strange ; my words were wild :
For many days my fever raged,
By thoughtful tenderness assuaged ;
For womanlike and skilfully
My blessed maiden tended me.

IX

Sometimes, within the dusky hall,
I think I hear the spirit call ;
And then, my troubled soul to calm,
I drown it with a holy psalm.

Sometimes, upon my bed at night,
I wake, and shiver with affright ;
Or lie asleep from dusk to morn
And dream I hear the demon horn :
Afar, I dream, it summons me,
Airily, O, airily.

Pegasus

O STEEP a poet in the sun,
And bathe a singer in the blue ;
And bring, to solace such an one,
Fresh, honied draughts of clover dew !
Then let a song for soothing float
From out the hermit-thrush's throat.
Upon a mountainside, apart,
Where blows no breath of earthly care,
There let him cheer his gentle heart,
And drink the joyous mountain air.
Perchance, before the day be past,
The wingèd horse may come at last,
And lightly curvet o'er the hill,
Then stand to learn the master's will.
Or if he wait till comes the night,
Until the Lady Moon arise,
And sleepy starlets blink their eyes,
And whippoorwills begin to call,
There 'll be such rambles through the skies,

Such antics on his upward flight,
Such caracoles fantastical,
Such circlings wild, and swift, and strong,
As ne'er were set in mortal song !

O Pegasus ! if I might be
Upon the mountain-slope with thee ;
And might I share thy sweeping flight,
And gambols in the mystic light ;
Or through the airy pastures wind,
With speed that leaves the breeze behind,
To join the starry company,—
'T were happiness enough for me.

Glamour-Land

AH, dim, lost Glamour-land,
On whose confines I stand,
Longing for home that shall be home no more!
There stood my palace grand,
Where now, on every hand,
The fiery swords of seraphs guard the door.

There once I roamed to cull
Dear hopes more beautiful
Than siren thoughts that musing monks resist:
Nothing too far, or fair,
But its mirage was there
Pictured upon the valley's rosy mist.

There each sweet day I heard
Songs of a brooding bird
Telling of purest pleasure yet to be:
There, by the singing streams,
Faint forms of darling dreams
Loitered and lingered, hand in hand with me.

Ah, dim, dear Fancy-land !
Thy welkin rainbow-spanned ;
  The softened light of halcyon hours o'erpast
Fading away, away,
All the expanse is gray
  As fades the moon on nights too fair to last.

Folly-Land

IN Folly-land what witchery !
What pretty looks, what eyes there be !
What gamesome ways ; what dimpled smiles ;
What lissome limbs ; what frolic wiles ;
What pranks to play ; what jests to hear !
Old Time forgets his sliding sand :
The days go tripping, hand-in-hand,
In Folly-land, in Folly-land.

In Folly-land, one idle hour,
The moonlight had a wizard power ;
Its eerie glamour turned my brain—
I would that I were there again !
We stood together, 'neath the sky ;
A bird was chirping drowsily ;
He smiled, he sighed, he held my hand,
Ah me ! ah well ! we understand,
'T was Folly-land, 't was Folly-land.

My sober friend, how worn your looks !
Your heart is in your mouldy books.
Here 's half a cobweb on your brow !
I seldom see you jovial now.
Fling down your volumes and be free
To take a pleasure trip with me.
Come, " Here 's my heart, and here 's my hand ! "
We 'll launch our skiff and seek the strand
Of Folly-land, of Folly-land.

The Guilty Lover and the Moon

I SEE the marred Moon in the day :
How pale she is ! She steals away.
Like a beast the stag-hounds track
She flies and never turneth back.
If I could know what she must know,
A shrieking maniac I would go.

What scenes she peers at in the night !
Many a loathsome, ghastly sight,
Frightful shows and deadly deeds,
Hateful crimes as common as weeds :
No wonder she is pale with fright.

She looks on horrid mysteries,
And never shuts her shrinking eyes :
She sees where the murdered corse is hid ;
Where the miser opens his coffer's lid ;
She hears the cries of the beaten wife ;
She hears small children plead for life,

She knows the pity of lives of shame ;
Every night she gazes on
Brutish acts without a name :
No wonder she is pinched and wan.

The Sun on many a crime looks down ;
Many a crime in many a town ;
Many a time he drinketh blood,
Evil he sees, and much of good.
But he is bold, and bright, and strong,
And thinks he knows the right of wrong ;
He scatters his bounty everywhere,
And smiles with a hearty, devil-may-care—
A brave old optimist is he :
But the Moon is timid as she can be.
For all the treasure under the ground,
I would not find what she has found.

O Moon, you watched us on that night,
Lingering in your softened light :
Full-faced, wide-eyed, *you* saw us stand,
Heart to heart and hand to hand.
Flit on, flit on, o'er heaven's floor,
And carry on your linèd face,
Until you wither in your place,
One secret more, one secret more.

Be the Judgment late or be it soon,
I know that the spirit of the Moon
Will stand as a witness at the rail,
And, shuddering, begin her tale ;
Every secret open wide,
Naught forget and nothing hide :
But till that Dooming Day shall come,
The pale-faced coward must be dumb ;
Till every evil be confessed,
She may not rest, she may not rest.

The Angels' Song

TELL me, ye shepherds of the upland plain,
What time the starry courts aërial rang
With rapture of the loud, seraphic strain.
Did naught remain ?
Did no heart learn the song the angels sang ?

On the long slope beside the plashèd pool,
Guarded by stunted thorn-trees, flaked with wool,
Where the sheep came to quench their seldom thirst—
O favored pool! that in thy tranquil space
Mirrored that night each rapt, immortal face
When on the drowsy ear the anthem burst,
And the strong seraphs hymned, in sacred joy,
Their glorious pæan to the Holy Boy !
Was there *no* tuneful shepherd, nice of ear,
Who caught the lilt of that celestial art,
And evermore could hear
The mellow chorus singing in his heart ?
In retrospective mood,

On home-made strings, or on the timbrel rude,
Could strike again
The music that the angels sang to men,
The music that high Heaven gave to earth
To celebrate the crownèd Saviour's birth?

Through a long life *one* kept each perfect tone,
And, musing, made the melody his own:
Then, in the tempest times that swept the land,
And scattered far and wide the shepherd band,
One, seamed with grief and eld, and hoary grown,
Still sat, as erst, upon the accustomed stone,
When came again the night of all the year;
Again upon the consecrated ground,
With sons and grandsons reverent around,
Whose Christ-filled hearts His love had tuned to hear.
"Sing us, O shepherd, that angelic air!"
Then flowed the cadenced heavenly harmony
From out a soul grown beautiful thereby;
While the hushed group were gazing on the sky
As though they heard a seraph shout aloud,
From the white bosom of a moonlit cloud,
The holy song whose echoes shall not cease,
The song of peace.

A Remonstrance to Fancy

FANCY ! Fancy ! let me be !
Cease to jibe and jeer at me !
Old friend, you are no longer kind.
Why make a league with Discontent ?
My eyes to present good you blind,
And weave an artful tapestry
Of pictured joys and beauties blent,
Eerie with what can never be,
An elfish glamour over all,
Fitful and fantastical,
Bewildering, and rich and strange,
With tints of wild, elusive hope,
As intricate and prone to change
As forms of a kaleidoscope.

Dear Fancy, let this fooling end !
I long to keep you for my friend,
To fling a rainbow now and then
Blithely across my spirit's heaven ;

With shapes too fine for mortal ken
To limn the painted skies of even ;
Or in dark winter months to throw
A summer landscape o'er the snow.

But, wilful fairy, tempt me not
To think, to do—I know not what ;
Do not you my pleasures wrong
With your deluding siren song,
And poisoned whisper, " Better far
The gifts in my bestowal are ! "
Or kindle longings in my frame
That like a sudden-leaping flame
Scorch and shrivel and destroy
Glad Innocence, and Peace, and Joy.

Come with looks serene and fair,
And a mild, engaging air ;
Then, if you give a hand to Trust
And one to Honor, do your will :
Freak and frolic if you must,
But be a friend to Reason still.
Or come, as erst, in quaintest guise,
And let enjoyment light your eyes :
Like a hoyden, flushed and free,

Taking liberties with me :
Strip my sober working dress :
Deck me in all daintiness :
Dimple as you used to do,
And I will gayly go with you.
  But shine with no uncanny gleam,
Like a tricksy, teasing sprite,
Or a will-o'-the-wisp at night
  Dancing up a sluggish stream.
Keep the thoughts I should not think,
  Keep the dreams I dare not dream ;
And do not sport so near the brink
Of that wild chasm, scarped and steep,
Where late you sported in my sleep.

To Memory

AH ! lovely lady with the stillest eyes ;
As calm as Death's ; deep as the summer sea ;
Just shaded by a downy cloud that lies,
White as a swan, between blue heaven and thee :
Thou lookest backward still, Mnemosyne.

Thy reveries are dear as poets' dreams ;
On childhood's innocence thou lov'st to dwell ;
On homely pleasures, and the simple themes
And tender tales that youthful mothers tell
To little children for a slumber-spell.

Yet I have known thee when thy mood was black ;
When wild Regret had clutched thee, as a prey;
And I have marked thee shudder, looking back,
And turn thy strained and startled eyes away
From some grim, muffled shape of cloudy gray.

Sometimes I meet thee when the night is clear,
For thou art gossip to our Lady Moon,
Who liketh well thy plaintive voice to hear
Chanting low music of an ancient rune
She sang before the worlds were out of tune.

All things are softened through thy filmy veil :
In misty light a lovely landscape lies ;
Vistas of 'passing beauty, fading, frail ;
Tinted with hues of Youth, and Love's surprise,
And rainbowed with the tear-drops in thine eyes.

I know thou makest many a holy hour
For those who look their lives of patience o'er :
They love thee most who least have feared thy power,
From whom thou dost inherit richest store
Of pleasant days and deeds that are no more.

Oft have I sought thee, pensive Memory, where,
With Melancholy for thy handmaid meek,
Thou dost discourse with such a moving air
That I may only pray when I would speak,
For prayers are strength, though all my words are weak.

The Dryad

'TIS my pleasure not to know
Much of mortal joy or pain ;
Blithely through my life I go
With playful fancies in my brain.
A furtive creature, wild and shy,
I may not meet a mortal eye ;
In densest woods alone I lurk
To watch the building birds at work.
Like a free, fantastic elf,
I weave my hair with berries red ;
Flit and frolic by myself,
And mock the singers overhead.

I used to be a thing of bliss ;
I knew no other life than this ;
But on a day, a golden day,
I found a mortal far astray.
I heard his footfall on the grass

And held my breath till he should pass.
He had a free and rustic grace,
An agile frame, a swarthy face ;
His coat was green, his cap was red,
His black locks tangled round his head.
I deemed him, as he loitered by,
Almost as beautiful as I.

He paused within an open glade,
And many a solemn word he said ;
And ever, when he ceased to speak,
Large tear-drops trickled down his cheek.
His eyes gazed upward, through the air ;
I looked, but there was nothing there.
He raised his arms, hand clasped in hand ;
His words I could not understand ;
Then sighed, and smiled, and so was gone :
'T was then I learned I was alone.

When young birds chirp themselves to sleep,
I sometimes wish that I could weep :
I sit me down upon a stone,
And feel that I am all alone :
I rest my cheek upon my hands
And sigh, but nothing understands :

I sing, my very songs are sad—
I would I ne'er had seen the lad !
Ah me ! I feel what must be pain—
Would I might see the lad again !

The Fairies' Masquerade

WHO hath not heard, when life was young,
At nurse's or at grandam's knee,
Enthralling stories said or sung
Of magic realms of faërie ?
Of elves that sport beneath the moon,
Around the hazel or the thorn,
While crickets chirp a dancing tune
Till all the east is red with dawn ;
Of how they freak, with tricksy plays,
Or slide adown the moony rays ;
Now at their round stone table sit—
A dainty leaf their table-cloth—
While firefly waiters round them flit,
They sup their steaming sweet-pea broth.

The meal is heaped upon the board ;
'T is part the brown bees' cherished hoard ;
A salad of the watercress,
Which with wild mustard seed they dress ;

With sour- and pepper-grasses, too,
And oil distilled from meadow rue.
They 've butter in a butter-cup,
Sippets of pollen dipped in dew ;
Wine in blue-bottles bottled up
And cakes of violets dried with care ;
Bread of the flour of mignonette,
Wild strawberries in cordial wet
Of cherry juice, well spiced and rare :
Would I might taste the fairies' fare !

At peep of dawn they 'd steal away,
And lurk amid the flowers all day :
But now, alas ! throughout the night,
  Beside the old witch-hazel tree,
We 'd vainly watch till morning light
  Nor hint of fairy frolic see.

And are they exiled from the earth ?
In some remoteness of a star
Where no intrusive mortals are
They hold fantastic revelry ;
With pranks and airy jollity,
With laughter shrill and antic mirth,
They trip around the favored tree :

There summer lasts the whole year long,
And life is like a cheery song.

And do they ne'er revisit earth,
To view the haunts that gave them birth?
Ah, yes! but not in elfin guise,
But in some garb of insect dressed,
In shape as suits the fancy best,
Of motley moths, or shining flies;
Or some wild creature of the wood
May better please the wayward mood.

Yon bird, scarce bigger than a bee,
That darts about the tulip tree,
A radiant, many-colored thing,
Now poising on its humming wing,
May be a princess in disguise;
Or yonder troop of butterflies
That share with bird and bee, and sup
A draught from every flower cup;
And chase each other wantonly,
With many a freakish pleasantry;
That flutter o'er the clover heads,
And suck the sweets of lily-beds;—
May be an errant, elfin band,

Bright mummers out of fairy-land,
To visit each accustomed place
  In beechen dell, or bosky glade,
And idle there a little space,
  To hold their frolic masquerade ;
Then flitting through the pearly sky
Up to their new-found home they fly,
And bid the prosy earth good-bye.

Fairy Fare

MABEL, darling Mabel,
Dancing down the lane ;
Flitting, like a butterfly,
Between the drops of rain !
Now the sun out-peeping,
Gleams upon her hair,
Glitters in the drops that deck
Her little feet so bare.
Mabel, pretty Mabel,
So gentle and so wild ;
She 's not like other children,
She 's half a fairy child,—
Ever watching, listening,
So quick of eye and ear,
As though she saw what none could see,
Heard what none could hear.

In her bed at midnight,
By her sister's side :

"Tell me, Mabel darling,"
So the sister cried,
"Why are you so silent,
Who used to be so bright,
Whispering to yourself all day,
Wakeful half the night?
Tell me, for I love you,
What has changed you so?"
Then the little Mabel
Whispered, shy and low:
"Listen to my secret;
I will tell you, dear,
What no other creature,
None but you, must hear.

"Last midsummer morning,
At the dawn of day,
I rambled through the meadows
For a lonely play.
In the willow copses
We call the wilderness,
I found—but guess, dear sister—
No, you would never guess!
I found a fairy table,
Round, and draped in white,

Where the fairies left it,
  Feasting overnight ;
Heaped with tempting viands,
  Dainty fruits and wine,
And sparkling crimson goblets,
  All wreathed with partridge vine."

" But oh, my little Mabel !"
  The frightened sister spake,
" You did not taste the fairy fare,
  Their bread you did not break ? "
Alas, the pretty maiden,
  She shook her curly head ;
To her anxious sister
  Whispering low, she said :
" I sipped a sip of fairy wine,
  I tasted fairy bread !

" I ate and drank," said Mabel,
  " And from that happy day
With mortal children, large and rough,
  I do not care to play ;
But I am ever waiting
  The coming of a band
To follow, follow, follow,
  Away to fairy-land :

And so I watch and listen
  Until the elfins come
To take me for their playmate,
  To make with them my home.''

Then up arose the sister,
  And to the woods she went ;
With the woodland creatures
  A summer day she spent :
Asked the woodland creatures,
  '' Tell me, I implore,
Must my little sister
  Live with us no more ? ''
Asked a squirrel racing
  Up a cherry tree,
'' Tell me, pretty squirrel,
  Tell the truth to me.''

But the squirrel chattered,
  Frisked and chattered on ;
Ate a wild red cherry,
  Flung to her the stone ;
Then away he frolicked,
  With a laugh went he,
Scampered down the cherry,
  Up another tree.

Then the sister wandered
  Onward, patiently ;
Found a big bee buzzing
  Round a flowering vine,
Sucking clover blossoms,
  Quaffing scented wine ;
Asked of him so humbly,
  Begged him so to stay,
That he hummed around her,
  In his clumsy way :
When he found the maiden
  Was no monstrous flower,
Off he flew in dudgeon
  To his honey-tower.

Many birds and insects
  Flitted gayly by,
Pausing not to listen
  Nor to make reply :
Till a yellow flicker,
  Tapping on a tree,
Paused and listened gravely,
  Listened curiously ;
Heard the mournful story
  That the sister told,

Then, with many an antic,
Pert and overbold,
Answered, while he neatly
Preened his wings of gold :
" The child that feeds on fairy food
Never can grow old ! "

" O flicker, pretty flicker,"
She said, with sob and sigh,
" You mean my darling Mabel,
My little pet, will die ? "
He spread his wings so lightly,
So lightly flew away ;
But the troubled sister
Wept the livelong day :
Until a vesper-sparrow,
Touched by her distress,
Lilted out his lyric,
Full of tenderness,
With a soothing message
Trilled the closing part :
" The child that feasts on fairy fare
Will keep a childlike heart."

The Fairy Camp

WHAT did I see in the woods to-day ?
I saw a fairies' gipsy camp.
The tents were toadstools, brown and gray,
Among the bracken, soiled and damp.
I called on a cowslip 'mid the green,
And borrowed a bit of fairy gold,
And then I found the Gipsy Queen,
And so I had my fortune told.

Ah, yes, she told me a secret true,
That wild-eyed gipsy, brown and red ;
But I may not tell it out to you,
For that would break the charm, she said.
And if you seek them by yourself
You will not find that strolling band ;
They have pilfered the wild bees' hoarded pelf,
And flitted away to another land.

The Last Night

AH ! how she trembles when the night is long,
And, sitting idle in her old armchair,
She hears the rude wind shout his drunken song,
While thoughts that sleep in light and only dare
To walk, like ghosts, on wildest nights forlorn,
Hold ghostly counsel till the breaking morn.

Thus, like the clangor of alarum-bells
When on a sleeping town the rabble springs,
A ringing in her pulses sinks and swells,
And times the song the Bacchant Tempest sings :
Thus beats the hurried tocsin in her brain,
And all her soul is sacked by Fear again.

" Wild night ! wild fear ! strong love, and stronger sin !
Ah ! recompense too just for me to bear !
The casement shudders back, *It* flutters in :

The trembling shadow of my guilt is there ;
In from the sleet, the night, the uproar wild ;
My shame and my despair—my child, my child !

" O little form that I may never fold !
Beyond my empty arms my baby stands.
It sobs, it cries, it shivers with the cold :
Its eyes are his : it wrings its tiny hands.
Ah God, my baby, that may never rest
In dewy slumber on my guilty breast !

" It was not I, thou little ghost, not I :
I slept as one who would not wake again :
They stole thee in my sleep. I could not die,
But woke to loss and emptiness and pain.
O heinous crime to save an honored name,
That none might point a finger at my shame.

" Here in my bosom burns a fiery tide
No velvet baby lips will suck away.
O cruel hurt of love ! O hellish pride !
O murdered baby, take your eyes away !
Thou weary child no mother-love can warm,
Flit out into the night, the sleet, the storm.

" The wind is wilder. Ah, Christ, let me die !
O Tempest, blow away my feeble breath !
In some hid cavern with my child to lie—
O sudden hope that gives me strength for death ! "

She leaves the chair; she wanders far from home :
" I come, my little lonely one, I come !
I reach the river : Oh 't is cold ; but thou
Art colder still, and I am with thee now ! "

The Dead Moon

I

WE are ghost-ridden :
Through the deep night
Wanders a spirit,
Noiseless and white ;
Loiters not ; lingers not ; knoweth not rest ;
Ceaselessly haunting the East and the West.

She, whose undoing the ages have wrought,
Moves on to the time of God's rhythmical thought.
In the dark swinging sea,
As she speedeth through space,
She reads her pale image :
The wounds are agape on her face.
She sees her grim nakedness
Pierced by the eyes
Of the seraphs of God
In their flight through the skies.

(Her wounds, they are many and hollow.)
The Earth turns and wheels as she flies,
And this Spectre, this Ancient, must follow.

II

When, in the æons,
Had she beginning?
What is her story?
What was her sinning?
Do the ranks of the Holy Ones
Know of her crime?
Does it loom in the mists
Of the birthplace of Time?
The stars, do they speak of her
Under their breath:
"Will this Wraith be forever
Thus restless in death?"
On, through immensity,
Sliding and stealing;
On, through infinity,
Nothing revealing.

III

I see the fond lovers:
They walk in her light;

They charge the " soft maiden "
To bless their love-plight.
Does she laugh in her place,
As she glideth through space ?
Does she laugh in her orbit, with never a sound,
That to her, a dead body,
With nothing but rents in her round ;
Blighted and marred ;
Wrinkled and scarred ;
Barren and cold ;
Wizened and old ;—
That to her should be told,
That to her should be sung,
The yearning and burning of them that are young ?

IV

Our Earth, that is young,
That is throbbing with life,
Has fiery upheavals,
Has boisterous strife :
But she that is dead has no stir, breathes no air ;
She is calm ; she is voiceless ; in lonely despair.

V

We dart through the void :
We have cries ; we have laughter ;

The Phantom that haunts us
  Comes silently after.
This Ghost-lady follows,
  Though none hear her tread :
On, on, we are flying,
  Still tracked by our Dead ;
By this white, awful Mystery,
  Haggard and dead.

The Hermit-Knight

IN a shaggy forest I know a glen
Where the were-wolf made his lair ;
'T was haunted of owls, but 't was shunned of men,
For a demon dwelleth there.
When the night was dismal, and wild, and wet,
And yells were on the gale,
I rode a black steed to the glen and met
That demon, grisly pale.

I sprang from my charger where he stood,
And I hailed the spectre dire :
The ground was rank with a smell of blood,
And hot with a smouldering fire :
I called him by his loathly name,
Unmeet for a Christian ear,
And I saw his face by a sudden flame,
Lurid with hate and fear.

I plucked the fiend by his long right hand,
As he sat on a corse, new-slain.

My voice was strong with a firm command :
" I have sought thee once again :
Show me to-night, show me to-night,
What thou may'st not keep from me."
His coward eye was hellish bright
With a glare not good to see.

My shivering steed, he pawed the moss,
His gasps began to fail :
By a murdered corse and a dying horse
I heard that goblin's tale :
But never a spirit that skims the sea,
Nor a phantom of the air,
Must guess what the foul fiend whispered me,
Nor dream what he showed me there.

I had power, I had power in that awesome hour,
And I read his spirit through ;
I made him cringe, and I made him cower,
For my heart was brave and true.
I chained him there with a new-forged chain,
By the side of the murdered wight,
And I left him howling a wilder strain
Than the howling of the night.

For ten long years on a mountain bare
I had wept and fasted sore ;

I had worn the stones with my knees in prayer,
To conquer a grace the more,
And to weave a spell for a fiendish heart,
A spell for a fiendish will ;
To baffle the spite of a demon's art,
I dwelt on the doleful hill.

He may harm no hapless passer-by ;
He may spread nor ban nor bale ;
I had strength and wisdom from One on high,
And my courage did not fail.
I won my will, for my soul was pure,
And the secret that I know
Hath given me power great ills to cure
As I journey to and fro.

Go not that way : it is haunted still :
The wolf has left his lair :
The owls have flown to my barren hill,
No living thing is there.
A murdered corse by a blackened stone,
'Neath an oak-tree, gnarled and gray ;
And a frenzied demon, alone, alone,
Till the earth shall pass away.

An Idle Dream

O MERCURY, lend me your twisted staff,
And lend me your wingèd shoon ;
For I would away, like a shooting-star,
To the other side of the moon,
And find me a little wee world alone,
A tiny planet to call my own ;
Where song-birds wanton, unscathed by man,
And sing as never an earth-bird can ;
Where streamlets murmur, " Forget, forget ! "
And never a tear has fallen yet.

There would I fly in each vexèd mood,
To rest in the bosom of solitude.
On shell-pink blossoms at ease I 'd lie,
While the young buds crooned me a lullaby :
There a rich accord is the voice of all,
And even the dew hath a silver fall :
There delicate beings of heavenly birth,
Too fair and fragile to live on earth,

Flit and flutter in airy play,
And laugh wild music the livelong day.

There fruit-trees cluster, and creepers twine,
And there would I mingle a nectar wine ;
And I would distil, from the plants above,
A magical perfume and call it " Love."

Then gayly return to the world of men,
And keep my secret from mortal ken ;
Up and down through the earth to go,
And ever a heavenly breeze should blow
And waft my perfume to each man's heart
Till all make proof of its soothing art ;
And loving-kindness, and joy, and rest,
Should heal the sorrows of each man's breast.
Then, Mercury, lend me your twisted staff,
And lend me your cap and shoon ;
For I would away, like a shooting-star,
To the other side of the moon.

Poems of Nature

A Bluebird in February

I HEAR the bluebird's quaint soliloquy,—
A hesitating note upon the breeze,
Blown faintly from the tops of distant trees,
As though he were not sure that Spring is nigh,
But fed his hopes with bursts of melody.
I would I had a spirit-harp to seize
The bolder tenor of his rhapsodies
When apple-blossoms swing against the sky.
On every dark or blust'ring wintry day
That airy harp the bluebird's lilt should play ;
And as I held my sighs and paused to hear,
The wand'ring message, with its full-fed cheer
And ripe contentment, to my life should bring
The essence and fruition of the Spring.

The Redbird

(Cardinal Grosbeak)

WHAT wealth is in your ruddy throat,
O bugler of the scarlet coat !
As rollicking and bold as erst,
I hear the silver clarion-burst
With which you herald in the Spring
To tourney with the Winter-king,
Whose gauntlet falls with ringing sound
Of challenge on the frosty ground.

About the breezy battle-plain,
" Right here ! Right here ! " you cry, amain.
The Spring, a lusty, green-clad knight,
With rondels pricking into fight,
Still bears his flower-wreathed lance in rest
To pierce his foeman's ice-mailed breast :
And when old Winter's jewelled sword
Lies shattered on the trampled sward,

And when you see the foeman fall,
How blithe shall ring your bugle-call
Of " Io ! Io ! Victory !
Now all the serf-bound streams are free ! "

The Rainbow

TO A. S. D.

WE are akin, dear soul,
Akin as are the rainbow in the sky,
The runnel on the knoll :
We are akin in spirit, you and I.

Ah ! how serene and bright
You stand with shining feet
And lustrous arch complete
Of rounded life upon the cloudy height !
You catch the light of Heaven and repeat
All its transcendent splendor in your face
And beautify a place
With radiance of a glory and a grace.

Thus is your life, O soul !
But I am like the stream
That hurries down the knoll—
As changeful as a dream,

As restless and as wild
As an impatient child :
Yet, thankful, dear, if, in some tranquil space,
I may reflect the radiance of your face.

The Mateless Bird

FULL half a warm and budding day
Within a little grove I lay ;
And still, from noon to evening's fall,
I heard a lonely wood-bird's call.
He wandered south ; he wandered north ;
With restless flitting back and forth ;
And still his tender, 'plaining cry
Smote on my sympathizing ear ;
And still I marked him fluttering by,
Now hurrying on, now pausing near.

The happy birds, the boughs among,
Were singing blithely as could be,
Love's bliss the theme of every song ;
But still that pensive melody
Upon the tranquil air would float—
A sweetly melancholy note.

At last, for that one sound of woe,
I felt my foolish eyes o'erflow,

I pitied so the birdling's grief ;
And thus, to give my heart relief,
" Poor bird ! " I cried, " can this thing be ?
Has Nature been unfair to thee ?
And left thee, lonely and forlorn,
From dawn to eve disconsolate,
Thy only task thy fate to mourn,
Foredoomed to live without a mate ?
Nay, little one, it is not so ;
Somewhere, in some secluded spot,
There mourns a little bird, I know,
As discontented with her lot.
Flit on, sad heart, flit east and west ;
With cries still ease thy burdened breast ;
Fly on, fly on, fly far and fast ;
For thou shalt find thy mate at last."

The Spirit and the Wood-Sparrow

'T WAS long ago :
The place was very fair ;
And from a cloud of snow
A spirit of the air
Dropped to the earth below.
It was a spot by man untrod,—
Just where
I think is only known to God.

The spirit for a while,
Because of beauty freshly made,
Could only smile :
Then grew the smiling to a song,
And as he sang he played
Upon a moonbeam-wired cithole,
Shaped like a soul.

There was no ear
Or far or near

Save one small sparrow of the wood
That song to hear.
This, in a bosky tree,
Heard all, and understood
As much as a small sparrow could
By sympathy.

'T was a fair sight—
That morn of spring
When, on the lonely height,
The spirit paused to sing,
Then through the air took flight,
Still lilting on the wing.
And the shy bird,
Who all had heard,
Straightway began
To practise o'er the lovely strain,
Again, again ;
Though indistinct and blurred,
He tried each word,
Until he caught the last far sounds that fell,
Like the faint tinkle of a fairy bell.

Now, when I hear that song,
Which has no earthly tone,

My soul is carried with the strain along
To the everlasting Throne,
To bow in thankfulness and prayer,
And gain fresh love, and faith, and patience there.

The Song Sparrow

WHEN, with her sandals green, the Spring
Steals on, with timid pattering,
And tearful lids and wind-blown hair
Half-veil the face we find so fair ;
Into my window, morn by morn,
The sparrow's simple strain is borne,
With varied carols that express
His wild and happy carelessness.
And as I hear his roundelay,
Sometimes, with half a sigh, I say :
" O sparrow, were you caged like me
Would you exult so ringingly ?
Or did you bear a broken wing,
My gentle neighbor, could you sing ? "

Bloodroot

A COUNTLESS multitude they stand,
A Milky Way on either hand,
Ere yet the earliest Ferns unfold
Or meadow Cowslips count their gold.

White are my dreams, but whiter still
The Bloodroot on the lonely hill ;
Lovely and pure my visions rise,
To fade before my yearning eyes ;
But on that day I thought I trod
'Mid the embodied dreams of God.

Though frail those flowers, though brief their sway,
They sanctified one perfect day ;
And, though the summer may forget,
In my rapt soul they blossom yet.

The Flicker

O THE flicker ! He is here—
April's hardy pioneer !
Soul of young hilarity !
He 's the bird, the bird for me !
With his lispings infantile ;
Many a quirk and roguish wile ;
Whims of wooing in his pate,
Toying, coying, with his mate ;
And his chucklings, loud and long,
Richer than the richest song.

Through the sober trees he flies,
Proper birds to scandalize.
See him in his shambling flight
On the serious Oak to light ;
Pass the laugh and pass the jest :
" Let 's be jolly, laughter 's cheap !
Oh, the joke 's too good to keep !
Tell it, tell it to the rest ! "

Careless conqueror of care !
Nature's motley he doth wear.
When I hear his hearty call
To the feast she spreads for all,
To her revels jovial,
Forth I hie with right good will,
To sup with her and sup my fill,
Join the merry rollicking
And celebrate the feast of Spring.
O the flicker, he is here,
Drunk with new wine of the year.

The Pale Primrose

IT is the early morning and the air
Quivers as though a spirit, passing there,
Fanned with his unseen wings the garden bed,
And light and sweetness from his pinions shed.

Grouped in the border, pale and faintly sweet,
The dear Primroses spring as though his feet
Pressing the earth had left a heavenly sign,
Tokens and hints of loveliness divine.

Humbly I bend upon the greening sod
To welcome thus the latest gift from God,
That was not yesterday and is to-day :
My soul illumined, that was dull erewhile,
As one who basks beneath a holy smile.

Scattering beauty on his onward way,
I seem to see the Spirit of the Flowers
Lightly adorning this old world of ours :

Touching the brown mould gently, here and there,
That wakes to love beneath his tender care ;
Smiles in brave colors ; breathes in rich perfume ;
And welcomes Summer in a burst of bloom.

April

AN INVITATION

COME browse with me along the lane,
With April freshness in your heart,
And April breezes in the brain
To blow the buds of thought apart.

The brook that stumbles o'er the stones
Is wid'ning all his silver scope,
And sings, with April in his tones,
A running song of youth and hope.

He runs to meet the glancing rill
Amid her cresses, cool and green,
Who lingers, smiling, coy and still,
Half-veiled beneath a cowslip screen.

Just here the mountain currant grows,
With spicy odors rich as meth :

Just here the slender bloodroot blows,
And shy arbutus wandereth.

When Autumn winds his mellow horn,
With pensive sweetness in its tone,
And leaves are flitting down forlorn,
Then pace the thinning aisles alone.

But when the bluebird wins his mate,
And singing swells the thrasher's breast,
Then, saunter down the lanes, elate,
Beside the friend that loves you best.

May

WHEN Eve went out from Paradise
With looks distraught and sad surmise,
And when she tried to make a home
For Adam in the thorny land,
By kinship I can understand
The homesick longing that would come,
The sad and lonely memories
Of Eden trees and Eden skies.

At sunset, when her work was done,
Perchance she sat to muse alone
And hear the Eden waters flow.
The birds might sing and she be mute,
Still tasting in her mouth the fruit—
That sweet beginning of her woe.
Perchance some bird that she had fed
Would come to flutter overhead ;
Some happy bird that built his nest
Within the cherub-guarded spot

Would come to thrill her aching breast
With tender jargon, unforgot ;
Or bring her in his beak a flower
She planted in a peaceful hour.

What heritage, O weeping Eve,
Your wistful daughters yet receive
Of yearnings and of longing pain
For that which may not come again !
What dim, inherited desire
Still thwarted by the swords of fire !

Yet when the riot garden-close
Just hints the coming of the rose ;
When sumptuous tulips burst apart
And rock the wild bee, heart to heart ;
When languid butterflies a-swing
From apple-blossoms droop the wing ;
When purple iris by the wall,
Imperial iris, proud and tall,
With white narcissus, is a-blow,
And nodding lilies, row by row ;
When hoyden creepers run apace
To kiss the lime-rock's wrinkled face ;

When snowball turns from green to white,
  And keeps the secret that she knows,
The pretty secret, out of sight,
  Wherein the robin's household grows ;
And when we pace the pleachèd aisles
And share, with tender words and smiles,
The beauty of the summer feast,—
'T is then we miss our Eden least.

The Nightingale and the Mocking-Bird

I

INTRODUCTION

WOULD I might hear the nightingale !
But what can wishing so avail ?
Would I might hear the mocking-bird !
Or would that I, for once, had heard
The singers try a match,
With pipe and trill and catch ;
With flavored sylvan fancies blent ;
Of all love's sweetness redolent ;
With quick, delicious passaging ;
And racy rondels of the spring !

Would I through verdurous ways might wend
Of some old forest that should blend
The charm of every clime !

With tangled copse and open glade,
And spicy depth of denser shade ;
There lissome vines should droop and cling,
And clumps of musky blossoms swing ;
And there should play an idle breeze
To toss the bloom of scented trees.
The day should shine without a stain,
With Eden weather come again.
Beneath a bower of jessamine,
With passion-flower and eglantine,
There, on the matted moss, to lie
And hear the pleasant rivalry !

II

THE MOCKING-BIRD

Then first a liquid joy should float
From out the native wilding's throat.
With frenzied eye, and quivering wing,
And 'passioned power that bird should sing ;
With wild and mounting rhapsody
As though he pined to pierce the sky ;
And when the last full marvel fell
There should be silence like a spell.

III

THE NIGHTINGALE

When time for brooding calm was o'er,
  Then might the touching silence break,
    With half a sob and half a song,
  To bid such lovely echoes wake
As never woke in wood before :
    Then might the bird his trillets throng,
As though he must his thanks express
In a burst of tenderness.

IV

To crown my transport, at the end,
These two one perfect song should blend ;
And from a wild magnolia tree
Might steal the haunting melody.
So weirdly sweet the stream would swell
From singers singing far too well
Their thirst in harmony to slake—
Sudden—the gentle hearts would break.
And with a mortal ecstasy
In one long burst of rapture die.

Perchance, what these, God-taught, had sung
Might loose, at last, my tuneless tongue :
In such a spot, on such a day,
I, too, might sing my soul away.

The Prelude

WHAT is astir where the shadows are dense ?
Something that baffles the curious sense ;
Something that shimmers, and whispers, and sighs ;
Something that glimmers to far-reaching eyes ;
The Shape of a song, or the Soul of a stream,
Or a Being awake from a beautiful dream,
Is pulsing, and stirring, and making prelude,
In the reverent heart of the reverent wood.

Is it a word that I never have heard ?
Is it a hint of a jubilant bird
That never was hinted before ?
Oh, what can it be that is new in the wood ?
That thrills with its meaning, but half understood,
A rapture, and more ?
A sound is created that never the breeze
Has carried till now through the city of trees :

Fresh tidings from God—a new message—is sent
Through I know not what delicate instrument.

And I would I had senses as fine as a sprite,
To hear and interpret the message aright :
But I think, oh I think, as I fall on my knees,
God is walking and talking again 'mid the trees.

Apple-Bloom

AH, yes ! how lovely youth and beauty are !
She lay along the low, recumbent limb
Of the old apple tree : her light guitar
She fingered when she sang, in girlish whim,
Green-ribboned, on her bosom rose and fell.
Her gown was palest green, and that was well.
The light, with half a glory, half a gloom,
Flickered and filtered through the apple-bloom.
Her cheek was like the blossoms' own in tint
And softly rounded contour ; just a hint
Of rosy flush. Her wealth of waving hair
Fell to the ground and made a radiance there.
Fresh fancies, light and gay as butterflies,
Fluttered and frolicked in her sunny eyes.
Against the trunk she braced her dainty feet,
And she was sweet as the young Spring is sweet.

The Grateful Heart

I THANKFUL am for all good things ;
For every blithesome bird that sings :
I thankful am for May and June
When most my life with Life 's in tune :
I thankful am for strawberries,
And very glad of cherry trees ;
Of apple-blossom and the fruit ;
Of mellow nut and pungent root.
Great good and solace come to me
From flowers upon the dogwood tree :
An unknown warbler sets me wild
With wonder like an eager child :
And, to my charmed and seeking eyes,
Each varied toadstool 's a surprise.

I thankful am for all fair things ;
For life and all the bliss it brings :
My soul is very glad thereof
Because God made me out of love ;
And most I joy, beneath His trees
To thank the Father-Heart for these.

A Dainty Fop

SO jaunty, free, and debonair,
And winning welcome everywhere,
A dainty fop has passed me by :
I did not see but felt him nigh,
And though he dared to kiss my cheek,
He did not speak, he did not speak !

Shall I confess, beneath the rose,
A secret you must ne'er disclose,—
That almost every summer day
This lover kisses me in play ?
But whence he comes or where he goes
No mortal knows, no mortal knows.

A cultured taste in him I find,
And proof of an æsthetic mind ;
He winnows first the clover fields,
And, next, the rose aroma yields :

Now who can tell me, from the scent,
Which way he went, which way he went?

A connoisseur of rich perfumes,
To-day he steals from lilac blooms;
To-morrow leaves the garden belles,
And flies to woodbine-scented dells:
Who could resist the sighing swain,
Nor kiss again, nor kiss again?

Like Psyche, in my arbors green,
I wait for him I ne'er have seen;
His fragrant breath betrays him nigh—
His fragrant breath and gentle sigh,
As though a burden on his breast
Was ne'er confessed, was ne'er confessed.

To none is this gay rover true;
He charms each day with odors new;
But when, where hides the partridge vine,
He finds the Lady Eglantine,
And when for her he leaves the rest,
I love him best, I love him best.

The White Rose

I SEE, in the garden border,
A dream of beauty there,
For the white Rose blooms in order
That the Moon may call her fair.

In the tangled garden, lonely,
No other bloom is nigh :
The trellised Roses, only,
And the White Rose in the sky.

And all the night is sleeping
Except the whippoorwill,
And the distant mountains keeping
A drowsy vigil still.

Come out to the garden, lover,
And drink the dreaming Rose,
And bid the Moon discover
The secret that she knows.

Then turn to the lady tender
And read, in her eyes' love-light,
The meaning they surrender
Of the Rose, and the Moon, and the Night.

Twilight in the Woods

THE hour for praise has come again,
Within these arches, tall and dim,
And all the forest is a fane
Where Nature sings her vesper hymn,
With birds and insects and the breeze
To voice her glad solemnities.

Here, at the ending of the day,
The Locust folds her leaves to pray;
The bees that cheered her all day long
Fly homeward with an even-song :
The Oak is at his orisons :
The stream with whispered chanting runs :
The Lady Birch and Alder trees
Do tell their beads like veilèd nuns,
With hanging vines for rosaries :
The flowers with meek petition rise
And lift to Heaven appealing eyes ;

Sweet eyes, all dimmed with holy tears
To-morrow's sun will kiss away :
Thus the sad spirit, worn with fears,
When darkness shrouds the glimmering day,
Succumbs to weariness and pain,
To smile when sunlight comes again.

Now stirs the blast, and from each tree
Responds a murmured litany :
Then—silence : till the reverent hush
Is broken by the tranquil thrush,—
Fit preacher for these solitudes,
Benignant hermit of the woods.

" Peace ! " speaks the lofty bird. " Be still.
Learn loving, and the Maker's will."
His pulpit is an ancient tree,
Draped with large creepers decently ;
From which he cries his parting word :
" O holy, holy, holy Lord ! "

Follows with tones of yearning love,
The benediction of the dove :
After,—the service comes to end,
And on my homeward way I wend

As one who walks within the Veil,
Or sees, bright-orbed, the Holy Grail,
And feels, as 't were, an aureole
Of chastened rapture crown his soul.

The Roses

DOWN the lane wandered the maiden fair,
And plucked the wild roses here and there;
Fair were the roses in their bloom,
Fresh and sweet was their rich perfume.
She gathered the buds of the sweet-briar wild,
And wreathed her flowers like a happy child ;
The finch sang softly, the thrush sang high,
The breezes murmured a low reply :
Flushed with bloom was the wild-rose tree,
Flushed with a lovelier bloom was she.

In the rose garden the maiden stands,
And twines the blossoms with loving hands ;
Bright are the roses in their prime,
Bright is the golden summer time.
Golden the roses, golden the hours,
For Love has found her among the flowers.
She hears the redbird call his mate,
She hears the coo of the brooding dove ;

The oriole warbles his song elate,
And life is a golden dream of love.

Down by the river, at daylight's close,
The young girl sits with her lover there ;
Rich is the flush of the dark red rose
That is twined in the braids of her sunny hair.
Sweet is the breath of the perfect flower,
Sweet is her lover's raptured kiss ;
Her life is crowned with its perfect hour,
Her heart is thrilled with a perfect bliss.
Deep grow the shadows ; the air grows chill ;
Weird is the cry of the whippoorwill.

White and silent the maiden lies ;
White and still is the shaded room ;
Closed to earth are her curtained eyes ;
Sweet is the air with a faint perfume.
White are the roses on her breast ;
White is the soul of the maid at rest :
Drop a tear on her lovely brow ;
Naught of earth can stain her now.

Strew, where they lay her, the roses fair ;
Plant the wild sweet-briar at her head ;

And let the golden roses there,
  Upon her grave, their splendor shed.
There let the deep red roses glow ;
  There let the lonely whippoorwill
Still, as the summers come and go,
  With plaintive call the ether thrill ;
And plant the white rose on her breast,
Lovelier, purer, than all the rest.

The Yucca

THE glamour flower doth bloom again :
The flower of which the Moon is fain.

Down the long border, in the night,
Glides the Moon-maiden, faintly white.

Under the Yuccas I saw her stand,
Resting a cheek on a slender hand.

The great white blossoms shone and shone:
A moment more—the dream had flown.

O Yucca ! Flower of mystery !
How the Moon-maiden loveth thee !

Long, long ago, e'er the world was old,
When the sad Moon felt she was turning cold,

Down to the earth her flower she sent ;
Pearl-bloom and tear-drop lustre blent :

And now, when they bloom in the border there,
The Moon-maid floats from her home so bare,

In the lone garden a space to weep
While yearning fancies invest our sleep.

'T is the saddest, the sweetest day o' the year,
For in every cup I have found a tear,—

A tear that smiles with a tender light :
And I know who shed them, yesternight.

The Wood-Thrush

WHEN to the inmost secret of the wood
I do betake myself, and therein find
A mossy seat, flower-broidered to my mind,
Whereon to muse of little understood
And vexing questions,—whether God be good
To send such pain and toil to all mankind ;
Or if the world be ruled by Nature, blind
And deaf and callous to her crying brood,—
Sudden the silence breaks into a song
Such as to summer woodlands doth belong,
A song that hath a soul and speaks to mine
In heavenly parlance : by that holy sign
My faith that tottered is made strong and whole :
Nature is God if Nature hath a soul.

To My Comrade Tree

" The tree is grown that shall yield to each . . . his last 'narrow house and dark.' "—Country Parson.

REMOTE in woods where thrushes chant ;
Or on some lonely mountain slope ;
Or in a copse, the cuckoo's haunt—
With fingers pointing to the cope,
There stands a tree, there stands a tree,
Must fall before they bury me.

O waiting heart, where 'er thou art,
At last thy dust with mine shall blend ;
For though we spend our days apart,
We come together at the end ;
And thou with me, and I with thee,
Must lie in perfect unity.

Within a cramped confine of space,
And owning naught of earth beside,

That heart must be my dwelling-place
For whom the world was not too wide.
A new-time Dryad, mine must be
The shape that shall inhabit thee.

Perchance in some lone wandering
On thine old roots I may have lain,
And heard above the wood-birds sing,
While God looked down upon us twain;
And did I feel no thrill, with thee,
Of fellowship and sympathy?

Is thy strong heart ne'er wearied out
With standing 'neath the overfreight
Of boughs that compass thee about,
With mass of green, or white, a-weight?
O patient tree, O patient tree!
Dost never long for rest, like me?

I know thou spreadest grateful shade
When fierce the noontide sun doth beat;
And birds their nests in thee have made,
And cattle rested at thy feet:
Heaven grant I make this life of mine
As beautiful and brave as thine!

And when thy circling cloak is doffed
  Thou standest on the storm-swept sod
And liftest thy long arms aloft
  In mute appealing to thy God :
Appeal for me, appeal for me,
That I may stand as steadfastly.

Let me fulfil my destiny
  And calmly wait for thee, O friend !
For thou must fall, and I must die,
  And come together at the end—
To quiet slumbering addressed ;
Shut off from storm ; shut in for rest.

Thus lying in God's mighty hand
  While His great purposes unfold,
We 'll feel, as was from Chaos planned,
  His breath inform our formless mould :
New shape for thee, new life for me,
For both, a vast eternity.

The Dove on the Monument

SOMETIMES, when vesper sparrows flit,
And trill their tranquil even-song,
Within a peaceful place I sit
And muse, the mounded graves among.
I know—nor brings the thought a sigh—
That here my outgrown frame must lie ;
Nor would I choose a happier lot
Than here to lie, my life forgot,
And let the soothing silence rest
The old-time tumult of my breast.

The summer's heat is tempered here,
Nor seems the winter's breath severe :
Here every choicest shrub and tree
May bud and bloom luxuriantly :
Here singing birds of every kind
Secluded sanctuary find ;
With jargoning the air they fill,
With love notes sweet or whistling shrill,

For here no ruthless sportsmen come,
Nor noisy troops of impish boys
May violate each hidden home
And fright the parents from their joys,
Till, fretted by domestic cares,
They lose their songs and sportive airs ;
But quiet mourners bringing wreaths
Move on with such a reverent tread,
That naked nestlings, 'mid the leaves,
May boldly stretch each callow head,
And peer above the crowded bed ;
And anxious mothers scarce will fly
When such soft footsteps pass them by.

When once, with sauntering step and slow,
I loitered here in pensive mood,
Content with tranquil solitude,
And with my quiet thoughts content,
Anon I raised my eyes, and lo !
A dove upon a monument
Stood for a moment motionless,
And seemed the sacred spot to bless.

She knew no cause for fear of me
To mar her calm security,

But brooded there a little space
  Outlined against the evening's gray;
Then bending with a gentle grace
  Spread her soft wings and passed away.

'T is well, I thought, this brooding dove,
Emblem of heavenly peace and love,
Should make, where these tired sleepers rest,
In this still spot, her sheltered nest.

Loneliness

A LILY alone in a border of Roses :
I saw her lean forward her beautiful head ;
And the breezes were rich with the breath of her longing,
Sweet grief wafted o'er to the Lily-bed.

There grew the bright Lilies, the fresh, golden Lilies;
They caught the warm light in each exquisite flower :
Did they catch the faint fragrance the breeze wafted over ?
Did they dream of their mate in the Roses' bower ?

Alas ! the meek stranger, alone 'mid her rivals !
I waited the end with a pitying sigh :
I saw her droop forward, away from the Roses,
And lean toward the Lilies, and wither, and die.

But when the last petal had faded and fallen
Among the soft Rose-leaves, blush, amber, and red,
Did the free Lily-spirit escape to her sisters?
Did the breeze waft her o'er to the Lily-bed?

Beneath the Pines

IF there be solace for the unquiet mind
In fragrant beds beneath the healing Pines,
Curtained by waving canopy of Vines,
Where one may rest apart from all his kind,
And hear no discourse but the moving wind,
Gossip of birds, and insect minstrelsy,
And not one murmur from that restless sea
Of vexing human uproar left behind :
Here let me rest upon the rugged floor,
And, dreaming, watch the heavenly argosy,
Making for port upon some unknown shore,
That noiseless scuds across the tranquil sky.
Here let me rest until I pine again
For human sounds to bring me joy and pain.

Are You Glad

ARE you glad, my big brother, my deep-hearted oak?
Are you glad in each open-palm leaf?
Do you joy to be God's? Does it thrill you with living delight?
Are you sturdy in stalwart belief?
As you stand day and night,
As you stand through the nights and the days,
Do you praise?

O strenuous vine, do you run
As a man runs a race to a goal,
Your end that God's will may be done,
Like a strong-sinewed soul?
Are you glad? Do you praise? Do you run?
And shall I be afraid,
Like a spirit undone;
Like a sprout in deep shade;
Like an infant of days?

When I hear, when I see, and interpret aright
The winds in their jubilant flight ;
The manifest peace of the sky and the rapture of
light ;
The pæan of waves as they flow ;
The stars that reveal
The deep bliss of the night ;
The unspeakable joy of the air ;
And feel as I feel,
And know as I know
God is there ?

Hush !
For I hear him—
Enshrined in the heart of the wood :
'T is the priestly and reverent thrush,
Anointed to sing to our God :
And he hymns it full well,
All I stammer to tell,
All I yearn to impart.

Listen !
The strain
Shall sink into the heart,
And soften and swell

Till its meaning is plain,
And Love in its infinite harmonies, that shall remain,
Shall remain.

The Rosy Yarrow

"NOW come, now come, take up your song,
And pace with me the banks along
Where blooms the sturdy Yarrow."
Far up they climb, the hilly sides,
And there, like shyly glancing brides,
We found the rosy Yarrow.
My heart was like the drop of dew
The merry sun was shining through
Upon the clustered Yarrow :
But what new joy it found that day,
My little song, you must not say,
Nor you, my bonny Yarrow—
A joy so dear, too dear to tell,
My flower, my friend, we know it well,
My bonny, bonny Yarrow.

The Yellowbird

UPON the unmown grass at noon
I lay as in a dreamy swoon,
All in a lovely rhapsody,
And seeing pictures in the sky.
The little clouds above me spread
Put out white fingers overhead,
And hand in hand a space would run
Before they melted into one.
The Honeysuckle told the breeze
The very sweetest thing she knew,
And this he whispered to the trees,
Then to my side the wanton flew,
With sportive waft stole gently by,
And turned the clover heads awry.

It was the latter August time ;
The year was in her fervid prime :
And as I lay I thought I heard
Wise Nature talking to herself,

Until I spied a Yellowbird
That, like a quaint and black-capped elf,
Clung to a golden lily-plume,
And seemed, somehow, a bird in bloom.

He sang his trillets o'er and o'er,
As cheerily as e'er before,
Contented with his simple art,
While every trillet touched my heart.
I love the bird that praises on
After the Master Thrush is done,
The bird that does not cease to sing
Tho' past the winsome weeks of spring ;
And cheerful souls I love that find
Each of God's seasons to their mind.
Just like a merry-hearted boy,
From a wise habit of pure joy,
I pray to Heaven that I may raise,
E'en in the winter of my days,
Some quavering notes of love and praise :
And may not He who made me find
Such simple service to His mind ?

Golden-Rod

SHE stood, the blooming flowers among,
  When Spring's soft airs were whispering,
And all the woods were glad with song,
  A poor, unsightly, weed-like thing.

The Summer, with her languid sigh,
  Stole on and warmed the winnowing air,
And still the wild bee passed her by,
  And still she grew, neglected, there.

All scattered lie the flowers of Spring ;
  The Summer's early bloom is dead ;
The song-birds have forgot to sing ;
  The thrush to other haunts has fled.

The mountain wears a misty crown ;
  The first red leaves are flitting by :
But to the fields is drifted down
  A glory from the glowing sky.

A reflex of the ripened sun
  All Spring and Summer stored with care,
The patient plant-heart's work is done,
  And now all Nature owns her fair.

And from each dainty golden cup
  With amber nectar richly stored,
The Bacchant bees with rapture sup
  And hum love-ditties at her board.

Thus the slow-changing soul that keeps
  Within her secret depths a-glow,
And feels, as in long, dreamful sleeps,
  The germ immortal stir and grow,—

The soul that feared itself so poor,
  Half doubtful of its ripening,
When Autumn's sun hath warmed its core,
  May bloom at last, a radiant thing.

The White Chrysanthemum

WHERE shone the bright Moon brightest
Upon the garden bed,
I saw the maiden whitest
Uplift her dainty head.

Pale lay the Frost, and paler
The cheek that felt his kiss;
As a white bride doth veil her
She veiled her brows with this.

Silent the withered garden,
Strewed with the Frost-king's pelf,
Save where the owl, her warden,
Hooteth to cheer himself.

Testing the high and lowly,
Seeking for one most pure—
Only a virgin holy
The Frost-kiss may endure,—

Comes the still one and lingers
Over the blooming bed,
Touching, with eager fingers,
Every unguarded head.

All the impassioned flowers,
Seared by his searching breath,
Blackened within their bowers
In the long sleep of death.

Passionate kisses, killing,
Fell on each glowing breast
Of the frail beauties, stilling,
Lulling them into rest.

Saintly and still and queenly,
Stands the white maiden there,
Wearing his gifts serenely
As maids their jewels wear.

She and the Frost, her lover,
In the soft, sleeping light
Of the pure Moon above her
Watch through the waning night.

An Autumn Anniversary

O BEAUTY, Beauty, thou wilt drive me mad!
Where shall I turn, or whither shall I flee?
Thou dost oppress the very soul of me
With longings for the dear delights I had.

In all the red and orange pomp I see,
In all the glory of the gold and green,
Naught but what is not, and what once hath been,
And all the pain that is and should not be.

Alas! alas! by all our powers of bliss;
By all the fleeting splendor of the day;
By the last rosy cloud that fades away,
There is no sadder loveliness than this.

O mist upon the valley, rise and rise,
And draw the moon within thy silver fold;
The day of my despair is dead and cold;
And all the stars are shining in the skies.

Late Chrysanthemums

BENEATH the last October sun
My drooping garden lies—
A lovely woman, past her prime,
With haggard eyes.

She bloomed through many a sullen night,
Through many a sudden storm ;
The breeze that fanned her tears away
Was fond and warm.

But now beneath the frost she lies,
A lone, neglected spot ;
Most like a heart by coldness chilled,
Where love is not.

The butterflies that shared her youth
Share now her dim decay ;
The birds that sought her in her joy
Have flown away.

But here and there amid the wreck,
The drift of leaves, appear
The hardy late chrysanthemums
To crown the year.

Strong, bright, courageous, as a smile
They cheer the withered place ;
Like the last charm pale Sorrow leaves
A faded face.

O Frost, that comes to all, that spoils
Our blossoms, one by one,
Mature these autumn flowers beneath
Our autumn sun ;

That when the days are growing dim,
And nears the wished-for end,
Some flower, some smile, may still be ours
To give a friend.

And when, ere long, beneath the snow
We rest, secure from pain,
Like the old garden we shall find
Our flowers again.

The Bird in the Crowded Street

A BIRD sings in a crowded street :
His notes are clear ; his tones are sweet ;
There is such uproar of the throng
It drowns the sweet bird's loudest song.
The trampling feet raise clouds of dust,
Yet still he sings because he must,
For Nature bids, importunate.
Alas ! poor bird, how hard his fate !
With none to heed the songs he sings,
Nor ever free to use his wings.
Would Heaven that he might fly away
To some old forest, green and gray,
And there, in tranquil solitude,
His voice might ring throughout the wood,
And timid creatures, frolicking,
Might pause to heed what he should sing :
But in this noisy, sordid mart
The sweetest bird might break his heart,
Might fall, unnoticed and unknown,
And die, 'mid hurrying feet, alone.

The Spirit of the Fall

COME, on thy swaying feet,
Wild Spirit of the Fall!
With wind-blown skirts, loose hair of russet brown
Crowned with bright berries of the bitter-sweet.
Trip a light measure with the hurrying leaf,
Straining thy few late roses to thy breast:
With laughter overgay, sweet eyes drooped down,
That none may guess thy grief:
Dare not to pause for rest
Lest the slow tears should gather to their fall.

But when the cold Moon rises o'er the hill,
The last numb crickets cease, and all is still,
Face down thou liest on the frosty ground,
Strewed with thy fortune's wreck, alas, thine all!

. . . . . .

There, on a winter dawn, thy corse I found,
Lone Spirit of the Fall.

Poems of Love and Friendship

Desire

AN APRIL IDYL

COME, dear Desire, and walk with me ;
We 'll gather sweets and rob the bee :
Come, leave the dimness of your room ;
We 'll watch how since the morning rain
The spider sitteth at her loom,
To weave her silken nets again.
I know a field where bluets blow
Like frost from fingers of the night,
And in a sheltered coppice grow
Arbutus trailers, blush and white.

She leaves the room and walks with me
Where dance the leaflets fairily ;
Across the stile and o'er the grass,
And down the shaded copse we pass.
What sweeter bliss beneath the sun
Than through the wooded ways to go

With her whose heart is almost won,
And let the fulness overflow !

Her voice is ringing clear and blithe :
I mark her motions free and lithe :
Sometimes the briers that lift her dress
Reveal the ankle's gracefulness.
The flowers, on which she will not tread,
Pay homage with each nodding head,
As though the Lady May, their queen,
Were lightly pacing o'er the green.

The bluebird to my suit gives heed ;
The wood-thrush wishes me good speed ;
And every bird in every tree
That peeps at her and peers at me,
Sings loud encouragement and long
And bids us welcome in his song.

Kind stones, I thank you for your grace ;
I bless each wet and marshy place ;
Low pile of logs, and fallen fence,
I owe ye twain a recompense ;
With prostrate tree, and matted vine,
Each bar that gives occasion sweet

To hold her supple hand in mine,
And teach her where to place her feet.

See, my Desire, the mossy nook
Where grows the pink anemone :
I 'll kindly lift you o'er the brook,
And 'neath the drooping dogwood tree
We 'll sit and watch the mating birds
And put their wooing into words.

O downcast eyes ! O tender glow !
O little hand that trembles so !
O throbbing heart and fluttering breast !
O timid passion, half-confessed !
We hear, and scarcely know we hear,
The redbird whistle bold and clear ;
Beneath the blooming dogwood bough
The moments pass, we know not how,
Till day is on her burning pyre,
And I have won my heart's Desire.

The Lover in the Woods

GAUZY veil of gossamere,
Dew-embroidered, gemmed, and sheer,
Thrown about the woodland ways ;
Fabric meet for fairy brides
That the flushed arbutus hides
From the careless seeker's gaze :
Faces shy that smile and peep,
Drowsy from a winter's sleep :
By each timid, dewy eye
That reflects the new-washed sky ;
By your bees that suck and fly ;
By your time of beauty ; say,
Did my lover pass this way ?

Thrushes joying in the tree
In a breezy melody ;
Squirrel, playing hide-and-seek
With abandon overbold,

Scolding, in coquettish freak,
  As sweet, teasing maidens scold ;
Grave and reticent cuckoo,
I expect the truth from you ;
Trees that peer into the skies ;
Ye are old and should be wise ;
By your screen of youngest leaves ;
By the shadow-dance it weaves ;
By your clinging vine-loves, say,
Will my lover come to-day ?

Mushrooms, toadstools, white and streaked,
Or with blistered venom freaked ;
Red and orange, umber-brown ;
Clustered like an Indian town ;
Round nail-heads of mottled gray ;
  Scattered in fantastic clumps,
Where small mosses have their way
  In the bole of earthy stumps,
Where the vine hath taken root,
And the lichen set her foot ;
Owned by fairy-witches, all
Springing at their midnight call,
In the moonlight, or the shade,
Where the magic wand is laid ;

By your birth and passing, say,
Will our love so pass away ?

Restless streams that sob and fret
  Like a child that has been sleeping,
Waking in a peevish pet,
  Till, beyond your boulders leaping,
And forgetting all your dole
  In wild, whirling races, after
  All your babbling breaks to laughter :

Then your mossy isles console ;
Then your pebble playthings please ;
And your dipping ferns appease :—
By your whims and antic wiles ;
By your dimples and your smiles ;
By your whisperings, unknown,
In a language all your own ;
By your songs of gladness, say,
Will my heart be glad to-day ?

Wild-grape-bowered, hidden dell,
  Once the fairest Dryad's home,
Where I long my love to tell
  When the happiest hour shall come ;

All young hearts of birds that mate ;
All young living things elate ;
All light dragon-flies that flit
O'er each bloom, caressing it ;
All sweet sights and sounds that be
Joined in joyous harmony ;
All things glad with loving, say,
Will my Love be mine to-day ?

In Absence

I THINK of you and wooded ways together ;
Of dimpled shallows, dark, pellucid, cool ;
Of deep refreshing draught in sultry weather,
From recess of the fern-rimmed forest pool.

I see you still in copse-grown, marshy places,
Where fallen willows bridge the brook across ;
Where earliest cowslips show their sunny faces,
And violets idle on a couch of moss.

I think of you in meadows rank with yarrow ;
With bramble blossom and the spreading may;
Or upland pastures where the vesper-sparrow
Trills the sweet dimming of the summer day.

The crested redbird in his whistled snatches ;
The squirrels' chatter in their airy game ;
The wild dove's call, the bobolink's gay catches,
But ring a hundred changes on your name.

It is your voice that mingles with the thrush's,
When from the border of the distant wood,
Alone, he fills the evening's solemn hushes
With the most touching grace of solitude.

I think of you when, in the soft moon's splendor,
I sit alone beneath our trysting tree,
And by some warmer glow, some yearning tender,
Feel all the messages you send to me.

The Message

I DREAMED I lived beside the talking sea,
And great white birds were neighborly to me ;
They brought me tidings strange from many lands,
And ate the broken limpets from my hands.

I tied a message to an osprey's breast
And sent him o'er the foam upon my quest,
To find my love where southern billows beat,
And drop the folded question at his feet.

I watched beside the sea for many days,
And strained my sight across the briny ways :
I saw his arrow-wings that shot the blue,
And to my arms the errant osprey flew :

Straight to my arms as to a place of rest ;
A drop of blood was on his snowy breast ;
Upon his snowy breast the stain was red ;
And I was answered, and the bird was dead.

Song

" Bind the sea to slumber stilly ;
Bind its odor to the lily ;
Bind the aspen ne'er to quiver ;
Then bind love to last forever."

—MOORE.

GO tame the eagle of the crag ;
Go steal the sting from mortal pain ;
Go stand the broken water-flag
Erect upon its stalk again.

Restore the freshness of a flower ;
The glory of a cloud restore ;
Then force the passion of an hour
To fill the aching heart once more.

Listen

O LISTEN, listen, while I plead with you !
The day is softly resting from its care ;
The evening wind is breathing out a prayer ;
The cloudy forms of spirits crowd the blue.

Thin spirit-forms that let the glory through,
With outstretched hands are swimming from the west ;
One wears the crescent moon upon his crest,
And all are dropping blessings down on you.

They drop as gently as the dropping dew :
Dear love, dear love, for all that I would say,
There is no fitter place, no fairer day ;
O listen, listen, while I plead with you !

Sidney Lanier

DEAR brother, thou who grandly didst aspire
To Holy Beauty, yet didst meek obey
The voice from Heaven that called thee, "Come up higher";
Thou who our listening hearts didst greatly sway
With magic of thy flute-toned, artful lay:
When, like thy Master, thou wast "clean forespent,"
Laid'st calmly down thy clear-voiced instrument.
How grandly now thy spirit, with no clod
Of frail and feeble flesh to hold her back,
Will follow through eternity thy God
In His vast, glorious, and harmonious track!

In the Meadow

IN the moonlit meadow my darling singeth ;
My love that is mine since yesterday ;
To the cope of heaven her pure voice ringeth,
And my heart beats time to her roundelay.

The moon dips lower ; the stars peep over ;
They seem to flutter their silver wings ;
And down by her feet, 'mid the scented clover,
The crickets are quavering drowsy things.

The birds, half 'wakened, call each other,
They twitter faintly the boughs among :
" Down in the meadow she waits her lover,
And sings, as we do, a mating song."

The trees by the brookside bend to hear her ;
The voice grows stronger ; the clear tones rise ;
Till the spotted moth-king pauses near her
To bask in the light of her starry eyes.

I slip by the marshes, I steal through the clover,
Like the stealthy breeze of the fragrant South ;
To greet her, my darling, and claim, like a lover,
The sweet of the song from her flower-like mouth.

The Moth and the Evening Primrose

THE Moth is waiting for the night
To poise his feathered wings, untried,
Fresh from their prison, scarcely dried,
And trembling for the trial flight.
"The Rose is dreaming of the Bee:
Perchance my Primrose wakes for me."

The evening wears a golden zone:
One waits and listens, like the flower,
She feels her fate and knows her hour.
The night is come, but not alone:
Love's wings are trembling on the air:
All the heart's treasure lying bare.

Longing

I

WHAT of the loves that glow
In the warm breast?
What of the hopes that grow
Into unrest?—
Hopes we may never know,
Still unconfessed.

What of the tears that well
In the hid eyes?
What of the griefs that swell
As they arise?—
Griefs that we dare to tell
Only by sighs.

II

What of the looks that speak?
What of the changing cheek?

" Silent, my dear, and shy ? "
Needless are words and weak ;
Into the depths I seek
Of thy clear eye.

III

What of the hiding veils ?
What of the doubt that quails ?
What of the yearning throe :
" Love, shall I *never* know ? "
What of the faith that fails ?
What of the no-avails ?

What of the hearts that break
For a strong sorrow's sake ?
O my own parted friend !
Over the distance send,
By thy soul-sympathy,
One little message dear,
Vapor of one small tear
Given to me.

Three Days

IT was a wild and lonely hill,
And in the long grass at my feet
You lay ; the breeze was almost still,
Poising on airy wings and sweet
With clover breath of resting cows ;
The light fell softly through the boughs :
That light was dear for dear Love's sake :
'T was there our hearts began to wake.

We watched the summer sun arise
Standing together on the lawn ;
Then turned, and in each other's eyes
We gazed to watch another dawn :
We felt the radiance of the sun—
Our day of love was just begun ;
That day was sweet for sweet Pain's sake :
'T was there our hearts began to ache.

They call the old wood Fairy-land :
I know we lovers loitered there ;

'T was nightfall, we were hand in hand,
While distant thunder stirred the air.
Your trembling tones were low and deep :
We smiled, we laughed, lest we should weep:
Then parted for dear Honor's sake ;
For Honor's sake ; for Honor's sake.
That spot is dear for Honor's sake :
'T was there our hearts began to break.

Let Down the Bars

I

A WIFE SPEAKS

IT was upon an autumn day
  We trod the pasture fields
To gather golden-rod and cull
  The calm that twilight yields.

And we were lovers, he and I,
  Though love was unconfessed :
It was that early, thrilling time,
  Of all love's times the best.

And yet some careless word or look,
  Some unconsidered tone,
I know not what, between us twain
  A barrier had thrown.

We loitered by the old stone wall
A moment, wistfully,
He watched the clouds a space, and then
Let down the bars for me.

And up the windy hill we climbed,
And sought the mossy stone
Where oft we came to watch the west—
But not the west alone.

He gazed as he would read my soul,
And I—the glowing skies,
But through and through, in every pulse,
I felt those gazing eyes.

The sun had set—and yet—and yet—
We sat beneath the stars :
He stirred—his breath came fast—he said :
" Sweetheart, let down the bars."

O Love, it was thine hour of hours !
How swift, how strong thou art !
One word, just " Darling ! " trembled forth,
And we were heart to heart.

The cricket at our happy feet,
  How cheery was his strain !
How kindly looked the heavens down !
  Looked up, the waiting plain !

And hand in hand we tread that plain,
  Beneath the watching stars ;
So near, so dear, our lives have grown
  There is no room for bars.

II

A WOMAN THINKS

O Soul to whom my soul was knit,
  I know not where or when ;
Towards whom I yearn, to whom I turn
  From all the world of men !

By stirrings of a spirit power
  That comes I know not whence ;
By all the fine and subtle thrills
  That rouse the slumbering sense ;

By all the conscious blood that springs
  To light the changing cheek ;

By all the faltering, by the tones
Of all the words you speak ;

By what the searching eyes reveal
When soul is finding soul—
When eager glances leap to meet,
And spurn the will's control ;—

By all the many signs of Love,
By all Love's truth, I know
Your spirit cleaves to mine—and yet—
I pray you tell me so.

We meet by day, we part by night ;
We join our clinging hands ;
And still, between us and delight
A spirit barrier stands :

Alas ! these phantoms should not be,
That keep our souls apart ;
My friend, my lover, and my love ;
Let down the bars, dear heart.

Golden-Rod and Bitter-Sweet

WITH golden-rod, in sunny glow
I decked, one day, my plain black dress ;
It seemed upon my face to throw
A reflex of its loveliness.

I felt the mantling color rise :
His guarded looks were grave, indeed ;
But there was something in his eyes,
A something that I dared not read.

Ah ! golden-rod, fair golden-rod,
You did not bloom in blooming spring ;
When lightly through the fields I trod ;
When violets were blossoming.

Ah ! golden-rod, bright golden-rod,
Why bloomed you not in blooming spring ?
You come too late in field and wood ;
I dare not take the gift you bring.

I tore its beauty from my breast :
  I strewed its blossoms on the sod :
But tenderly I laid to rest,
  In keeping safe, its slender rod.

Ah me ! how golden was its glow :
  It lighted up my sombre dress ;
And seemed upon my life to throw
  A reflex of its loveliness.

One brought me bitter-sweet that day :
  " Alas ! " I cried, " the gift is meet."
I threw the golden-rod away,
  And now I wear the bitter-sweet.

The Lullaby

A LOVER SPEAKS

THE great white Moon is wandering over the sky,
And she sings as she goes: 't is an ancient lullaby.
The rocking sea looks up, for he hears her song,
And a dropping stillness follows the sound along.
'T is a spell for his lonely heart that she sings so low;
Stiller and stiller and stiller the billows grow,
Calmer and calmer the passionate heart of the deep;
For she croons, and croons, till she croons him away to sleep.

And I and my heart are alone by the quieted sea,
And my heart is burning and beating and wild in me:

But I know a white lady, magnetic, and lustrous,
and dear,
With a tranquil and delicate voice I am starving
to hear ;
And I would she were singing, singing, singing
so low,
Stiller and stiller and stiller my heart would grow,
My turbulent heart, with its surge, like the surge
of the deep,
Would be solaced, and silenced, and sung, like the
sea, to sleep.

The Hill

IN my pilgrimage have climbed a hill
Round which a summer world in verdure lies;
But I, poor simpleton, have only eyes
To note if Love be in my vision still.
This greenest glade that hides a fresh'ning rill
May shade him till from slumber he arise;
Or, when the last shower-sprinkled blossom dries
From yonder bloomy tangle, he may fill
This restless air with song that oft he sang
In the dear valley we have left behind,
Where once our mingled voices cheer'ly rang.
My Love! I hear thee singing down the wind!
Brief storm may ravine: what is that to me,
Sheltered within thine arms and safe with thee?

The Night Watch

A SHROUDED woman sits through the dark night
Upon the old roots of an oak, alone ;
She hears the wind, she sees no point of light :
She rocks herself and cries, and maketh moan.

The night grows wilder, and the owl is out,
The field mice tremble to his shivering cry ;
The mad wind beats the homeless leaves about,
Thin shapes of evil souls are hurtled by.

She moans as one that mutters in his sleep,
With cold and writhen lips that dully rave :
" Lo ! I have murdered Love and laid him deep,
And I must sit and watch beside his grave."

The Four-Leaved Clover

WE went a-walking on a day,
I and my Irish lover,
And strange to say, upon the way
We found a four-leaved clover.
"Good luck!" my happy swain did cry,
And pinned it on my breast;
And then—why should I amplify?—
All lovers know the rest.

They know what foolish things were said,
What foolish things were done,
On what light wings the moments sped
Until the set of sun:
And neither cared to look beyond
Nor con the future over,
For I was young and he was fond,
And all the world was clover.

O happy days! too quickly flown,
That memory oft retraces!

We two have sadder, wiser grown,
  And care has lined our faces :
Yet still I sometimes look and smile
  Upon a faded leaf,
And with a tender thought beguile
  My hours of pain and grief.

And I have been a happy wife
  These dozen years and over ;
And he has led a useful life—
  He raises wheat and clover :
But all the luck we found that day,
  I often think with wonder,
Was in the Fate we both obey
  Which tore us twain asunder.

Rosette

ROSETTE, we loved him, you and I :
But you were as a tender bud,
Shut-eyed, that only feels the sky ;
I, in my prime of blossomhood.

Both loved. I won. Three years have passed ;
Three years you need not envy me :
The meteor was too bright to last
That crossed my life's dark canopy :
And now, in sunny climes you blow,
While all my petals strew the snow.

Telepathy

WHY, from the far-away,
Did you send such a waif to me,
You seer with the long-reaching eyes,
You soul with the mage's vision?
Oh, on a lavish day,
My dream went out to grope,
Blind, on the hills of Hope,
And there, by a fond misprision,
The waif of your spirit found her,
Kissed her, clasped her, and bound her,
Your captive dream to be.

On an Indian-summer day
When Joy, before she dies,
Pants with a wild death-passion,
My songs from the hills arise
To greet you in lover's fashion.
O Captor that art not free,
Bound by a dream's control,
Do you miss your straying soul,
You body so far away?

A Question

MY Psyche, straying in a glimmering night,
A flitting moth, o'er drenched and drowsy bloom,
Sees the faint radiance from thy spirit's room,
And to that distant hope directs her flight.
Thus in forlornest need and longing plight
The lost bee flies to hide in golden broom ;
Thus hies the insect to the spider's loom,
That dew-decked peril, flashing in the light.

What wilt thou do? Thy splendor softly shade,
That flies may quiver round it, unafraid,
Or burn and dazzle till the wings that soar,
Shrivelled and scorched, are useless evermore ;
Or wilt thou draw the screen and close the bars,
That the poor, baffled moth may seek the stars?

Sympathy

WE talked together, you and I :
It was a queenly night in June ;
Low hung the moon in yonder sky,
And on your cheek low-glanced the moon.

Your gentle hand was mine to hold ;
My ill-fed heart began to speak ;
And ever, as the tale was told,
Dear friend, the moon was on your cheek.

Old loss that would not let me rest ;
Old grief that slept, but ever lay
A languid load upon my breast,
Awoke, and wept themselves away.

Up climbed the moon ; slow waned the night ;
And still you bent to hear me speak ;
I drank the comfort of the light
In those bright tears upon your cheek.

From off my life the burdens fall :
  Still in their graves through tranquil years
They rest, those weary sorrows, all,
  That faded in the light of tears.

Indian Summer

YES, the sweet summer lingers still ;
The hazes loiter on the hill :
The year, a spendthrift growing old,
Is scattering his lavish gold
For a last pleasure.
The robins flock, but do not go ;
We share the wood with footsteps slow,
In sober leisure,
Or sit beneath the chestnut tree,
Our hands in silent company.
Not yet, dear friend, we part, not yet :
Full soon the last warm sun will set ;
The cricket cease to stir the grass ;
The gold and amber fade away ;
The scarlet from the landscape pass ;
And all the sky be sodden gray ;—
Too soon, alas, the frost must fall,
And blight the asters on the hill,

The golden-rod, the gentians, all,
And we must feel the parting chill :
But oh, not yet, not yet we part,
The Summer strains us to her heart ;
The world is all a golden smile,
And we may love a little while :
The Summer dies, and hearts forget,
And we *must* part—not yet, not yet.

Parted

O THAT I stood in the presence of God ;
In the palpable presence of God,
And had voice for one cry !
That my body were dead, and my soul were alive
In the light of that imminent Eye!

" God ! give me one boon for my life,
That was patient and long ;
For the waiting ; the years,—oh, the years !
For the hunger and tears ;
For the hurt and the wrong :
God! grant me one boon for my life!
Somewhere—oh Thou knowest the where—
In Thy worlds with their heavens and hells,
In the limitless spaces of air,
He *is*, and Thou knowest the where !
A boon, oh, a boon ! Send me there !

" For I bore it, the worst that was sent ;
The pitiless ache of the tears ;
The loss, and the fierce discontent
And the horror and fears
Of that silence more hard than a wall !
And the fancies, so maddeningly sweet,
More cruel than all :
By the love that is deathless I call
As I fall at Thy feet."

Would I cry ? Would the floods be unsealed
In that Presence, in sight of the Thrones ?
Would I jar the loud joy of the Saints
With my strenuous tones ?
Or stand with my hand on my mouth
Unable to praise or to pray :
Just *feeling*, " Thou knowest it all;
What *is* there to say ? "

As You Went Down the Road

AS you went down the road, dear,
As you went down the road,
How chill the breeze began to blow—
My heart took up its load ;
The skies that had been blue and bright,
How fast they darkened into night.

And will you ne'er turn back, dear ?
And shall we never meet ?
Do no glad cries come up the road ?
No swift returning feet ?
Half-way to meet you I would run,
Though long the way and set the sun.

Alas ! the days go on, dear :
How dulled the daylight seems,
Since you went down the road, dear,
And left me to my dreams ;
Left me to bear my weary load,
As I toil after, down the road.

Miscellaneous Poems

To a Poet

IF thou art a poet-son of God
  Fix upon the heights thy steadfast glance ;
Listen with quick ear to catch His word ;
  Speak, as He shall give thee utterance.

Tell what earth unseals to thee,
And the sky reveals to thee ;
What the hoarse wind shrieks,
And the dark tide speaks ;
What the storm-clouds thunder
  In their meeting crash ;
What the lurid wonder
  Of the lightning flash.

Why the strong sun sets,
  And the planets rise ;
Why the rainbow spans
  The wet summer skies ;
What the forests utter
  With incessant sound ;

What the caverns mutter,
  Rumbling underground ;
What the crag reveals,
  Where man never trod ;
What the abyss conceals
  Of the ways of God.

What the eagle calls
  To the wild glen ;
What the waterfalls
  Answer again.
What the snake hisses ;
  What the wolf yells ;
What, to the nestling,
  The owl's hooting tells.

What the hawk screameth
  Over her nest ;
What the heart dreameth
  In mother's breast;
What the streams are gurgling
  In a pleasant voice ;
Why the lambs are racing ;
  Why the birds rejoice ;
What thrushes sing to thee :
What church-bells ring to thee.

Why the flowers fade ;
  Why the earth-worm dies ;
Why the chrysalids
  Turn to butterflies.
What the message of the rose
  And the violet ;
Why each sweetest thing that grows
  Is with tear-drops wet.

What the mind guesses,
  Day after day,
Through dim recesses
  Groping its way.
What the stars shout
  Each unto each ;
What the moon answers
  In silver speech :
What of joy reaches thee ;
What thy pain teaches thee ;
  That, do thou teach.

Let thine inspiration,
  Thy wisdom, be
What all God's Creation
  Calleth to thee.

The Struggle

"BODY, I pray you, let me go!"
It is a Soul that struggles so.
"Body, I see on yonder height
Dim reflex of a solemn light;
A light that shineth from the place
Where Beauty walks with naked face:
It is a light you cannot see:—
Lie down, you clod, and set me free.

"Body, I pray you, let me go!"
It is a Soul that striveth so.
"Body, I hear dim sounds afar,
Dripping from some diviner star;
Dim sounds of holy revelry:
It is my mates that sing, and I
Must drink that song or break my heart:—
Body, I pray you, let us part.

"Comrade, your frame is worn and frail;
Your vital force begins to fail:

I long for life ; but you for rest :
Then, Body, let us both be blest.
When you are lying 'neath the dew
I 'll come, sometimes, and sing to you :
But you will feel nor pain nor woe :—
Body, I pray you, let me go ! ''

Thus strove a Being. Beauty-fain,
He broke his bonds and fled amain.
He fled : the Body lay bereft,
But on its lips a smile was left,
As if that spirit, looking back,
Shouted upon his upward track,
With joyous tone and hurried breath,
Some message that could comfort Death.

Suppose

WHEN through the long hours of the night
A restless vigil oft I keep,
And ponder, till the morning light,
On all the cares that banish sleep :
There sits, upon my tumbled bed,
A teasing demon at my head,
And whispers in my tortured ear,
So loud I cannot choose but hear,
A dreary catalogue of woes
That all begin alike : " Suppose ! "

" Suppose ! Suppose ! " he whispers, first,
" Suppose the water-pipes should burst ?
Suppose the doctors say the worst
Of poor rheumatic Jimmie's case ?
Suppose you never sleep again ?
Suppose you get that horrid pain
You had, last winter, in the face ?

Papa is looking rather pale :
Suppose his splendid health should fail ?
Suppose the gout attack his toes ?
Suppose ! suppose ! suppose ! suppose !

" Suppose the landlord raise his rent ?
Suppose your Charles his luck abuse
To speculate with every cent
And all his hard-earned fortune lose ?
Suppose the horses run away— "
On, on, the teasing urchin goes—
" Upon Virginia's wedding day ?
Suppose ! suppose ! suppose ! suppose ! "

At last I answer, once for all :
" Suppose ! suppose the moon should fall ! "
The bed is soft and warm and wide ;
I turn upon the other side :
With quiet breathing, long and deep,
I try to cheat myself to sleep ;
Yet still the demon interposes
To rouse me from my sweetest dozes.
I 'd like to smother in the " clo'es "
That wretched little imp, Suppose !

The World Song

"YOU have the Earth, O Sun!"
Sang the Moon;
"But I, but I have the Sea!"

"You have the Sun, O Earth!"
Sang the Sea;
"But I, but I have the Moon!"

Then the Sun and the Earth
Made mirth;
And the Sea and the Moon
Sang on;
And Love, who listened, caught up the strain
To sing it into our hearts again.
And I know not how, but that oldest rune
Of the Sea and the Moon
Holds all the mystery and love-lore
Of the world and many a planet more;
But Love knows the tune.

At the End

FEARLESSLY, into the Unknown
Go forth, thou little soul.
Launch out upon the trackless sea,
Nor wind nor stars to pilot thee,
Alone, alone, alone !

Thine is a helpless plight.
Thou canst not turn thy helm,
Nor reach the harbor any more ;
Thou driftest to an unguessed shore,
Dark, dark the night.

Yet launch and take no care ;
For what can care avail ?
In the dark void, the awful space,
Where wand'rest thou to find thy place,
Thy God is even there.

Sapphires

TENDERNESS AND TRUTH

THE opal hath a baleful gleam,
And sheds a spectral light ;
Like a weird moonbeam on a turbid stream
Where witches dance by night.

The restless ruby decks the breast
Of many a weary one ;
But I seem to see in its sorcery
Heart's blood congealed to stone.

The icy diamond dazzleth me
With its glittering, soulless light ;
Like a vessel's wake o'er a freezing lake,
Too pitilessly bright.

The topaz hath a yellow flash,
Like the eye of a savage thing ;

And the pallid pearl is a fragile girl,
Who fades ere blossoming.
Green emeralds for a diadem
Cast but a sickly hue ;
But sapphires have a tender light,
And mirror heaven's blue :
Then crown my queen with the sapphire's sheen,
For my queen is tender and true.

Morning Roses

O ROSES, glowing in this amber bowl !
O roses, gleaming in your happy dew !
I would I had some roses in my soul
As beautiful as you.

Such thoughts as children think in holy mood ;
Such thoughts as infants' guardian forms of light,
Or purest maidens dream in solitude,
Should be my roses white.

Stirrings of hope and joy as fair as brides ;
Such thoughts as victor souls in Heaven think,
Musings of saints with vision satisfied,
Should be my roses pink.

With flaming zeal and infinite desire ;
With brave renewal after blight of woe ;

With strong endeavor and celestial fire,
My golden rose should glow.

A wise new plan for helping men forlorn ;
A sympathy of great compassion bred ;
A warmth of love from suffering nobly borne,
Should be my roses red.

Had I such blossoms blowing in my soul
How gladly would I pluck them for my King,
And bring them, brimming o'er Life's golden bowl,
A morning offering.

Fate

WITH Sodom apples fill thy harvest bin ;
Barter heart's wealth for gold in Fashion's mart ;
Traverse rough seas some distant point to win,
Without a chart ;

Fray the fine cord of Love until it break ;
Launch thy pirogue before the storm abate ;
Tease the prone, sleeping Peril till it wake ;—
Then rail at Fate.

On the Eve of War

O GOD of Battles, who art still
The God of Love, the God of Rest,
Subdue Thy people's fiery will,
And quell the passions in their breast !
Before we bathe our hands in blood
We lift them to Thy Holy Rood.

The waiting nations hold their breath
To catch the dreadful battle-cry ;
And, in the silence as of death,
The fateful hours go softly by.
O hear Thy people where they pray,
And shrive our souls before the fray !

Before the sun of peace shall set,
We kneel apart a solemn while ;
Pity the eyes with sorrow wet,
But pity most the lips that smile.

The night comes fast ; we hear afar
The baying of the wolves of war.

Not lightly, oh not lightly, Lord,
Let this our awful task begin ;
Speak from Thy Throne a warning word
Above the angry factions' din.
If *this* be Thy Most Holy Will,
Be with us still—be with us still !

GOOD FRIDAY, 1898.

Wings

SHALL we know in the Hereafter
All the reasons that are hid?
Does the butterfly remember
What the caterpillar did;
How he waited, toiled, and suffered,
To become the chrysalid?

When we creep so slowly upward;
When each day new burden brings;
When we strive so hard to conquer
Vexing sublunary things—
When we wait, and toil, and suffer,
We are working for our wings.

Conflict

FLUSHES of dawn that wither into gray ;
Hints of sunrise that fade to moonrise pale ;
Beginnings of bright song that die away ;
Blight of half-opened blossoms, slim and frail.

Looks of wild longing, sad, impassioned, dumb ;
Strength of endeavor foiled by callous Fate ;
Sore shrinking from the empty years to come ;
Then the dark vigil, grim and desolate.

" Ah ! for one draught of Joy's delicious cup,
One dance with Pleasure wreathed with flower and vine ;
Ah ! for a feast where Love and I might sup,
And pledge each other in Youth's golden wine."

Inner revolting full of fiery pain ;
Dull stretch of duty done in bitter stress ;

The footsore journey o'er the weary plain ;
And the long fasting in the wilderness.

Then the strong drink of victory over self ;
The deep'ning glow of Faith's rekindled fire ;
The crisis past ; the slow return to health ;
The birth of Hope ; the death of starved Desire.

And, at the last, to lie as on a breast,
Rocking to slumber, till the sighing cease ;
Then the still voice of Death shall murmur
"Rest";
But Some One just beyond shall answer,
"Peace."

The Singing Heart

THOU Heart! why dost thou lift thy voice?
The birds are mute; the skies are dark;
Nor doth a living thing rejoice;
Nor doth a living creature hark:
Yet thou art singing in the dark.

How small thou art; how poor and frail;
Thy prime is past; thy friends are chill:
Yet as thou hadst not any ail
Throughout the storm thou liftest still
A praise that winter cannot chill.

Then sang that happy heart reply:
"God lives, God loves, and hears me sing;
How warm, how safe, how glad am I,
In shelter 'neath His spreading wing!—
And there I cannot choose but sing.

November

'NEATH naked boughs, and sitting in the sun,
With idle hands, because her work is done,
I mark how smiles the lovely, fading year,
Crowned with Chrysanthemums and berries bright,
And in her eyes the shimmer of a tear.

Faint are the days, and soft the tender light ;
Brave are her Oaks, and brave her Evergreens ;
And brave the birds that whisper a spring song
Before they leave, with half-reluctant flight,
The summer nests that will be filled erelong—

The summer nests that will be filled erelong
With summer's wreck, the scared and hunted leaves ;
When the winds pipe a rally and their prey
Tremble in fence-rows, or are swept away
And whirled across the lawn in dizzy flight.

Tho' ancient Winter shiver at the door,
There is a promise folded out of sight
In every bud upon the bending brier
Of that sweet time, most dear to my desire,
When summer and my friend shall come once more.

The Stream and I

WE ramble on, the stream and I,
Still singing, still companionless ;
We run to find, beneath the sky,
Some arid spot, some life to bless :
The brook is dreaming of the sea ;
But I, fond spirit, dream of thee.

The brook's bright waters flow and flow ;
All lush and green his track appears,
And it is given me to know
Some choral of the chanting spheres :
Our lives are tuneful as the birds,
With rippled song and gentle words.

And if, sometimes, we lurk apart
In secret grot or covert dale,
To bide a space and gather heart,
Anon we 're laughing down the vale.
Though rain or tears our forces swell
We find the sun and all is well.

Fortitude

THE trees are standing, straight and bold :
Stripped for their wrestle with the cold.
The clouds are flying, torn and gray :
The restless birds have flown away.
The storm-swept soul has cast aside
The vestments of her summer pride.
Come, ice and snow ; come, shrieking blast ;
The soul, deep-rooted, standeth fast,
And bears, through Winter's buffeting,
The secret promise of the Spring.

The Tide

I WATCH the tide come in from sea :
Lord, is there any tide for me ?
So long, so long the sands were dry,
So long upon Life's shore I lay,
Feeling the waters ebb away,
Like seaweed that is left to die !
The tide comes in, it floods the sand :
Lord, is Thy coming near at hand ?

Christmas Eve

THE moon is in a tranquil mood ;
The silent skies are bland :
Only the spirits of the good
Go musing up the land :
The sea is wrapped in mist and rest :
It is the night that God hath blessed.

If you but set your heart ajar
A Christmas gift to win,
Some Blessed Being from some star
Will softly enter in
To leave, within the hallowed place,
A likeness of the Saviour's face.

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